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NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2016

Raising Awareness By Doing Good

Grassroots Group Empowers LGBT Community Volunteers

By Central Voice

"We want to raise the profile of the LGBT community in a positive manner," Travis Woodyard tells *Central Voice*.

Helping with Pride assists with community service projects like bagging shoes for shelters in partnership with Classic Dry-Cleaners. Or helping Dillsburg Library move to a new location. The nonprofit group has also bagged 1,200 pounds of green beans at the Central PA Food Bank.

"...it was the perfect way to make a positive impact"
-Dan Tobin

Woodyard had been looking "for an LGBT service organization, but none existed," he explains. "So, with the support of my husband and a core group of friends I started Helping with Pride."

In his search, many of the organizations Woodyard found were religion based, "and that did not align with my personal beliefs. Rotary International was an option, however, the commitment they wanted with attending meetings weekly was more than I was looking for."

Undaunted, the 34-year-old native Iowan founded Helping with Pride, a nonprofit organization registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Dan Tobin, 47, took to the group quickly. Originally from Pittsburgh, he spent 18 years in Boston, followed by two years in Lynchburg, VA, before moving to the region. Once he settled into his job, he wanted to get involved in his local community, same as he had been in previous locations.

"When Travis started Helping with Pride, I thought it was the perfect way to make a positive impact in the community while meeting others who share a similar life-

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Helping with Pride volunteers bagged more than 1,200 pounds of green beans at the Central PA Food Bank.

Each of us is the expert when it comes to our body, says yoga instructor Karen Foley.

TRANS & QUEER YOGA:

A Safe Place for Self Care

By Central Voice

"My stress level goes way down," said one participant in a Trans & Queer Yoga class at Lancaster's Unitarian Church, led by Karen Foley, MA, LPC, originally from Chicago.

Foley is currently teaching a restorative yoga class on Sundays, 12:30 p.m., at Zoe Yoga at Zoetropolis in Lancaster. She hopes to bring her popular classes to Harrisburg in November. Foley is a professional therapist who specializes in trauma within the LGBT community at Weigel Counseling and Lake Therapy.

Foley is no stranger to helping people learn how to lower stress in their mind and body. She has over 14 years experience working with trauma and the body. She has worked with combat

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Central PA AIDS Coalition Geared to ACT UP

IF CURRENT TRENDS CONTINUE:

54%

OF ALL MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN WILL BE HIV-POSITIVE

-University of Pittsburgh researcher Ronald Stall

By Central Voice

ACT UP Central PA is now "at full throttle," Jay Grandis, tells *Central Voice*.

The activist organization is fashioned after the original ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), founded by Larry Kramer in New York City in 1987 amidst the earliest days of the AIDS crisis.

Last summer, after successfully defeating a proposal by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to consolidate and refashion their local HIV services, Kirsten Felix Burkhart, director, AIDS Resource, her husband Gary Burkhart, long-time activist Dan Maneval, Amy Harada, AIDS Resource assistant director, and Rick Schulze, long-time AIDS Resource volunteer, put together a

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conference
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Philadelphia Marriott Downtown
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The largest annual conference of LGBTQ leaders, activists and organizers lands at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown.
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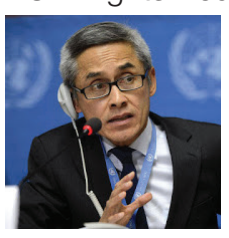
Political Updates

INTERNATIONAL

• Criminalization Protects Indonesian Values

A group of academics and activists recently urged the Constitutional Court of Indonesia to criminalize fornication and homosexuality in the latest hearing in a lawsuit that began earlier this year. The suit, which has been brought by 12 academics and activists, has already had several hearings, but captured international attention when it was reported that the petitioners sought the criminalization of homosexuality. But they are actually seeking a broader reform of the country's criminal code, according to court filings, that would not only criminalize homosexuality but also make sex between unmarried people a crime.

• UN Rights Recommends Thai LGBT Envoy



The latest word from the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Intersex Association about the selection process for a United Nations special envoy on queer issues is that we are one big step closer to the establishment of this position. A longtime highly regarded international advocate and expert on human rights, Vitit Muntarbhorn, who hails from Thailand, is the top choice of the leader of the UN's human rights body in Geneva.

• Mexicans Protest of Marriage Equality

National Front for the Family, opponents of marriage equality have protested throughout Mexico, hoping to kill a proposal from President Enrique Peña Nieto that seeks to override barriers to marriage for same-sex couples remaining in 21 of Mexico's 31 states. In one protest, organizers delivered a petition reportedly signed by 300,000 people calling on the Mexican congress to pass a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. The protests have the endorsement of a group of Catholic bishops who circulated a letter declaring "we support and encourage the coalition" and calling on their peers to "encourage and promote enthusiastic and creative participation of all individuals, families and groups" in these marches. Meanwhile, Mexican LGBTI marriage activist group Frente Orgullo Nacional de México (FONMX), one of the new groups that has sprung up, has created a change.org petition asking the Pope to fire Mexico City Archbishop Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera for "promoting hate."

• South Africa Bans Pastor

The South African government banned anti-LGBT American pastor Steven Anderson, Faithful Word Baptist Church, Tempe, AZ, from entering the country. South African media reported the pastor had planned to travel the country to "win souls." The Southern Poverty Law Center says Anderson has previously called for the execution of gay men and lesbians. In a 2014 sermon, he said that gay men should be killed in order to have an "AIDS-free world by Christmas." Anderson celebrated the June 12 massacre at gay nightclub Pulse in Orlando, Fla., that left 49 people dead and 53 others injured. South African Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba said that Anderson is an "undesirable person" under the country's Immigration Act.

• Will Indonesia Criminalize Homosexuality?

Grindr, Hornet – and about 80 other apps and websites with LGBT content - face a ban in Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country following a closed door meeting of the country's Ministry of Communications. "The participants of the meeting all agree to block websites promoting LGBT," Aidil Chendramata, ministry director of information security, told BuzzFeed News. The panel included representatives from the Ministry of Human Development, the National Police, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which was represented by a member of the country's Muslim clerics association. "Most of the contents are leading toward pornography [and have] violated the law on pornography and the law on child protection," Chendramata said. The Constitutional Court is separately considering a petition that could make homosexuality a crime in Indonesia for the first time.

NATIONAL

• Lesbian Legislator Against Gay Marriage

A Hawaii legislator lost the chance to face off against her Republican rival in November – despite her opponent being technically not eligible. Democratic state representative Jo Jordan made headlines three years ago when she voted against equal marriage, even though she's openly gay herself. "Down on that floor we're not only representing our constituency that elects us, we're representing the 1.4 million people and that's where I feel, that's where my duty begins," she said at the time. It turns out she may not have been representing her constituency like she thought. Jordan lost by 10 points to Cedric Gates.

• Syphilis Jumps 15% Among Gay & Bi Men

POZ.com's Ben Ryan reports that syphilis rates are rising alarmingly among men who have sex with men (MSM), who saw a 15 % jump in the number of diagnoses between 2013 and 2014. The burden of the sexually transmitted infection (STI) is particularly high among MSM in the South, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).The actual burden is relatively small: Only about 20,000 people were diagnosed with syphilis in 2014 in the United States, compared with 800,000 people diagnosed with gonorrhea. But syphilis' upward trend, which is driven by MSM, is troubling because of how it may gather steam. (Rates of gonorrhea and chlamydia are also rising.) CDC recommends that all sexually active gay and bisexual men—those who reported having sex with a man in the past 12 months—be tested at least annually.

• Texas AG Joins Transgender Law

Texas and 12 other states have injected themselves into the ongoing legal battles over North Carolina's anti-LGBT law — by asking a federal judge to put those lawsuits on hold for now. The law, HB 2, was passed earlier this year, and one of the provisions — the subject of several lawsuits — limits public restroom usage to people's "biological sex," using a definition that targets transgender people unable to get their birth certificate changed to reflect their gender identity. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, joined by 10 other state attorneys general and two governors, specifically asked U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Schroeder to put the Justice Department's pending challenge to that law on hold while other cases proceed.

• North Carolina Loses More Lucrative Events

The Atlantic Coast Conference is moving championship games out of North Carolina due to the state's anti-LGBTQ HB2 law. "As members of the Atlantic Coast Conference, the ACC Council of Presidents reaffirmed our collective commitment to uphold the values of equality, diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination. Every one of our 15 universities is strongly committed to these values and therefore, we will continue to host ACC Championships at campus sites. We believe North Carolina House Bill 2 is inconsistent with these values, and as a result, we will relocate all neutral site championships for the 2016-17 academic year. All locations will be announced in the future from the conference office." The ACC announcement follows the NCAA's decision to stand up for LGBTQ equality by moving all 2016-2017 championship events out of the state of North Carolina due to HB2. Since the NCAA announcement, Town of Cary officials have estimated the Governor's refusal to repeal HB2 will cause them to lose out on $2 million in direct visitor spending in Cary alone.

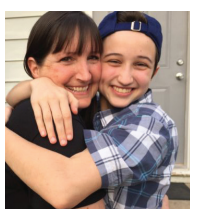
• Rutgers Conviction Tossed

A New Jersey appeals court recently threw out the 15-count 2012 conviction of former Rutgers University student Dharun Ravi, whose roommate, Tyler Clementi, killed himself after being captured on a webcam kissing another man. The three-judge panel dismissed four bias intimidation counts against Dharun Ravi because of a change in state law since Ravi's 2012 trial. The judges ordered a new trial on other counts including invasion of privacy, tampering with evidence and hindering apprehension because, they wrote, the evidence prosecutors used to prove the bias charges "tainted the jury's verdict on the remaining charges, depriving defendant of his constitutional right to a fair trial." Ravi faced up to 10 years in prison but was sentenced to 30 days in county jail plus three years' probation and community service. He ended up serving 20 days.

• Lawsuit Filed Against VP Candidate Pence

A transgender man prohibited from changing his legal name because of his immigration classification is suing Indiana state officials, including Governor Mike Pence, Republican vice presidential candidate. The lawsuit was filed by MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) and Transgender Law Center on behalf of a 31-year-old Indiana resident, alleges that a 2010 state law requiring proof of citizenship to obtain a change of legal name is unconstitutional. "I want to use a name that is in line with my true identity," said the plaintiff, who was granted asylum in the U.S. last year. "Without a legal name change, I am forced to use an I.D. that is inconsistent with who I am and puts me in danger of harassment, violence, and being outed as transgender whenever I present it. I am simply asking for equal treatment under the law."

• WI School to Halt Trans-discriminatory Policy



A federal court has ruled that a Wisconsin school must immediately halt its discriminatory policy of singling out a transgender boy, Ashton Whitaker, and forcing him to use a restroom separate from all other students. Whitaker, represented by

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voice box

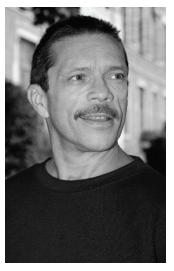
GREAT ARTICLE
Thank you for this great article! And I loved the way you also highlighted the 1987 March on Washington, something that many of your readers probably don't know much about.
- Sue Hyde, co-founder Creating Change

WONDERFUL
It's been a pleasure to do the column; you have a wonderful publication!
- Deb Battista, Dauphin County Library System, and Central Voice Book Review columnist, now retiring from the library and her column.
Voice wishes Deb the very best in her next part of her journey.

E-mail your thoughts to posops@aol.com

publisher's voice

New Service Group 'Helping with Pride' Sets Example


Frank Pizzoli

"The Gay" remains all over the place.

We can marry in Pennsylvania but there are no basic civil rights protections – we can still be fired for being gay or refused services by a hotel or restaurant.

Assimilation has spawned lots of inclusion and lots of self-promotion. In that regard the LGBT community is not different from the mainstream culture. We pine to know who is A Powerful Individual or a Power Couple. Nothing wrong with being the first to LGBT or Queer something. Getting out into the marketplace and doing what we want is one of many features that makes this country great. The "A" in America could easily stand for Aspiration. Some of those aspirations benefit the entire community not only the individual.

Enter Helping with Pride, the region's newest gay group with a worthy mission.

"We want to raise the profile of the LGBT community in a positive manner," Travis Woodyard tells *Central Voice.* (See story on page one.)

HelpingWithPride.org

Woodyard did his homework. Couldn't find an organization that fit the bill. So he acted on his own, along with support from his husband and friends, to form Helping with Pride.

Helping with Pride assists with community service projects like bagging shoes for shelters, moving a community library, or putting 1,200 pounds of green beans in to bags at a food bank.

Active with the group since its inception, Dan Tobin says, "There are people who would love nothing more than to see those of us who are LGBT locked back into the closet." Therein is the effectiveness of the group's approach. "You meet us, as a group, volunteering – in some instances – side by side with other groups, like Classic Drycleaning, for one purpose – to help others."

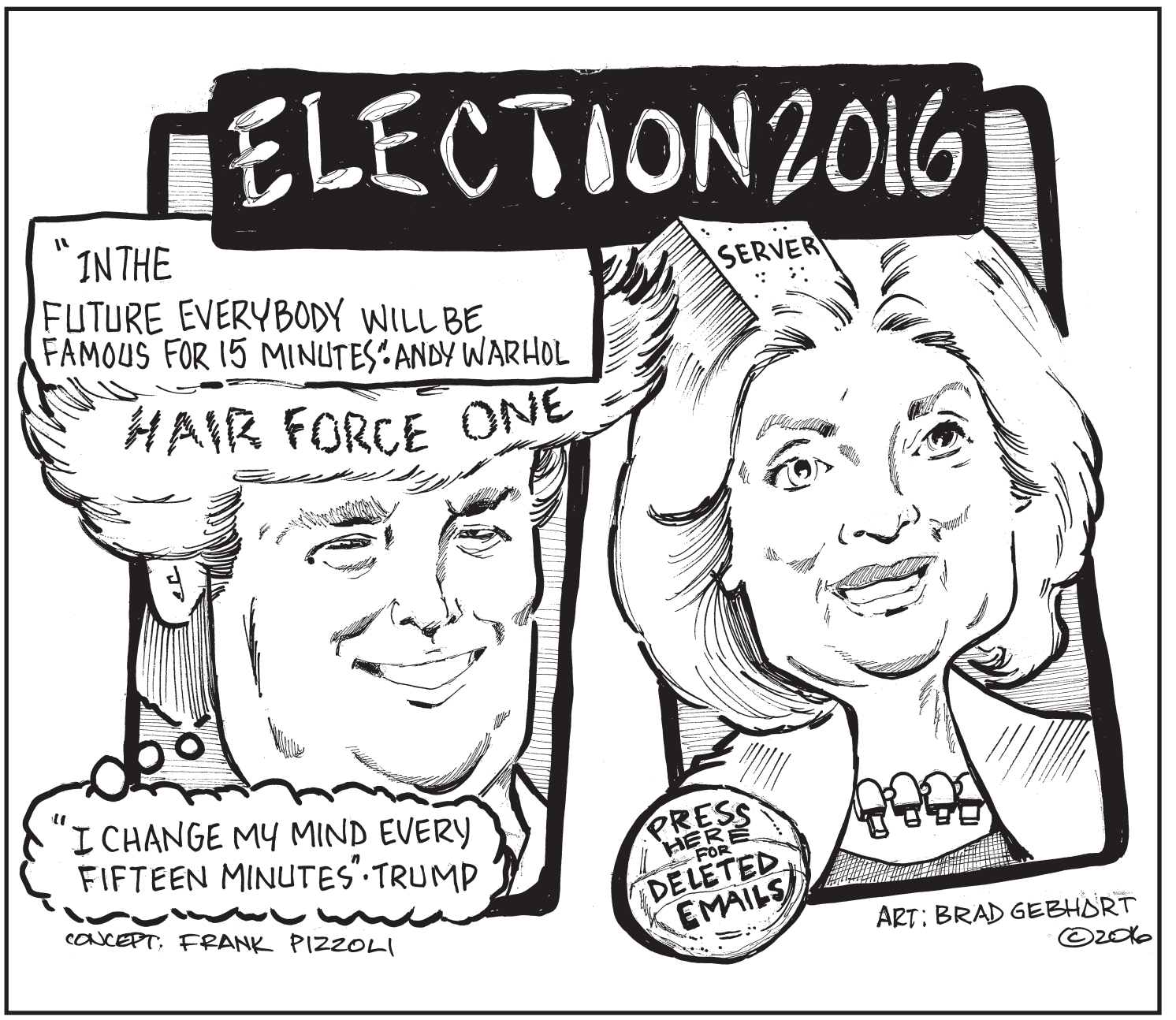
It's not about who is the first to fill in the blank.

It's not about who is, or wants to be, a Power Individual or Couple.

It's about the power of being there alongside the community-at-large. Showing them we don't bite. Queer doesn't rub off on them.

"At the end of each project I feel personally fulfilled, knowing that our group made a difference in the lives of others," Tobin says.

Info: helpingwithpride.org, Facebook, travis@helpingwithpride.org


ELECTION 2016
"IN THE FUTURE EVERYBODY WILL BE FAMOUS FOR 15 MINUTES." ANDY WARHOL
HAIR FORCE ONE
SERVER
"I CHANGE MY MIND EVERY FIFTEEN MINUTES" - TRUMP
PRESS HERE FOR DELETED EMAILS
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community voice

FIVE YEARS LATER:

Ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Is Progress We Must Keep

By Stephen Peters

Sept. 20 marked the five-year anniversary of the official end of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) — the archaic and deeply discriminatory law that barred gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans from serving openly in the military. The law had a profoundly negative impact on the military, was catastrophic to the lives of service members forced to serve in silence or lose their careers, and devastating to their families.

I speak from experience. My own service in the Marine Corps was cut short when I was forced out under DADT after refusing to continue hiding who I am. Since then, I've witnessed firsthand the profound progress toward equality we've made as a nation, and in our Armed Forces. It's progress that would be imperiled under a Trump-Pence administration, underscoring the urgency with which we must fight to elect a President who will ensure the continuation of historic efforts to treat all service members with the dignity, equality, and respect they deserve.

Thanks to the repeal of DADT, and the recent end to outdated policies that prevented transgender people from serving, the LGBTQ community is finally able to openly and proudly serve our nation. The military now can recruit and retain our nation's best and brightest, without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. Anyone who is qualified and willing to serve can do so. It's a reality that in comparison to only a few short years ago seems like night and day. No longer does a service member have to worry about being seen with their family by the wrong person in public. No longer do some military spouses have to cross the threshold of their home each and every day and go to work pretending as if their family doesn't exist. No longer do military kids have to go to school and avoid talking about their parents over fear of them losing their job.

The horrific realities these service members and military families faced each and every day under DADT is something I know too well. The tragic events of 9-11 led to my decision to enlist in the Marine Corps after college, and I was proud to honorably serve my country. After re-enlisting for another four years, I found myself at a point where I could no longer go on hiding something as basic as who I am. I wanted to continue to serve, but the law said I was suddenly unfit for duty, simply because I am gay. It was a moment of truth that changed my life forever.

I'm not able to re-enlist now because of my age, and I often wonder where life would have taken me if I was still serving my country on active duty. Thankfully, I'm able to continue my service in other ways, including by supporting my spouse who has served in the military for more than two decades. I'm also able to work each and every day with the Human Rights Campaign and the American Military Partner Association to ensure LGBTQ military families have the support they need and deserve. We must never go back to the dark days of DADT.

I can't change what happened to me, but I can work

The U.S. Military District of Washington Joint Armed Forces Color Guard presents the colors at an LGBT Pride Observance

to ensure that discrimination of the kind perpetrated by DADT never again finds a way into our nation's laws. But make no mistake: the progress we've made over the last five years is reversible, and the stakes of this presidential election couldn't be higher.

By surrounding himself with some of the nation's most anti-LGBTQ activists, Donald Trump has threatened to roll back the LGBTQ equality gains we've made both in the military and out.

That's just one of the reasons why I'm supporting Hillary Clinton for President of the United States. There is no doubt that she will continue building on the equality legacy of President Obama, ensuring that all service members are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. It's progress worth fighting for.

Stephen Peters is a spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign and Founder & President Emeritus of the American Military Partner Association.

What a Trump Presidency Would Mean for LGBT Equality

By Chad Griffin, President
Human Rights Campaign

Recently, ISIS pushed four men off a building in Mosul because they were suspected of being gay. Last month, the Ugandan government detained citizens attending a pride parade and ordered them beaten by other inmates. In Bangladesh, the editor of the nation›s only LGBTQ magazine was recently found hacked to death.

As we consider what the 2016 election will mean for LGBTQ equality across the United States, we also can't forget what this election will mean for our global community.

Donald Trump has spent his campaign threatening to undo crucial protections for LGBTQ people in the United States, vowing to appoint judges to the Supreme Court to turn back the legalization of same-sex marriage andsupporting state-sanctioned discrimination against transgender people.

He has courted extremists who foment hate both here and export it abroad. His running mate, Mike Pence, as a congressman in 2009, opposed language in federal legislation to monitor and combat human rights violations against LGBTQ people abroad, accusing Democrats of attempting to "promote a gay rights agenda around the globe."

Trump has also sought support from leading exporters of anti-LGBTQ hate, including the Alliance Defending Freedom. Well known for the work it does within US borders, ADF is also spreading hate in countries around the world, from fighting equality in Russia to recruiting and training anti-equality activists in Nepal.

Together, Donald Trump and Mike Pence seem to have little interest in -- and perhaps little understanding of --the dire plight faced by asylum seekers, including those who seek to flee the violence of ISIS or escape the anti-LGBTQ regime in Russia. And yet, Trump says he's a friend to the LGBTQ community. But let's look at what he would actually do.

Recently, Trump proposed an ideology test on new immigrants that would require those coming into the United States to show they are, among other things, tolerant of LGBTQ people. Putting aside the fact that he and Mike Pence would apparently fail their own ideology test on several fronts, the very existence of such a vetting policy would create another obstacle for refugees — including LGBTQ people fleeing countries where they can literally be put to death simply because of who they are.

By contrast, today -- thanks to the work of Hillary Clinton as secretary of state, and others -- LGBTQ people can receive priority resettlement because they face a significant threat of violence, torture, and even death in the countries they are leaving. The policy also prioritizes other vulnerable groups such as children, widows and older refugees, as well as targeted communities like religious and ethnic minorities.

While Trump was busy cozying up to Vladimir Putin back in 2011, Clinton was declaring before the international community that "gay rights are human rights." She was creating the Global Equality Fund, which supports human rights defenders working to protect LGBTQ people in more than 80 countries.

She was also helping ensure the United Nations Human Rights Council passed its very first resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity in 2011. In Clinton, the LGBTQ community has a leader who was not only willing to make historic commitments through our foreign policy, but has taken action.

Donald Trump and Mike Pence pose a clear threat to equality here in the United States, particularly when it comes to marriage equality, basic civil rights protections and the makeup of our Supreme Court. But let's also consider what's on the line for the gay teen living in Jamaica or the transgender woman living in Honduras or the men living in daily fear of being exposed, targeted and murdered by ISIS.

For them, our foreign policy can mean life or death.

In a Trump-Pence administration, does anyone think human rights for all will remain a pillar of our foreign policy? Or that our embassies abroad will provide the same beacon of hope to local LGBTQ communities? Or that whomever Trump selects as his secretary of state or UN ambassador will go before the international community to fight against discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity?

Would Donald Trump stand up against hateful legislation in countries like Russia and Uganda when he's endorsed the ability of US states to legalize discrimination? The answers to all of those questions are: clearly not.

This election is about many crucial issues of great importance here at home. But we can't forget that we also hold lives in our hands around the globe. Who we elect as our next president will either destroy the progress we've made or continue building toward a world where all LGBTQ people are safe from violence, discrimination and fear.

Chad Griffin is the president of the Human Rights Campaign, a national civil rights group advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

New Mexico Widower Denied SS Benefits

By Andy Lyman
New Mexico Political Report

Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham is asking the Social Security Administration to change a policy that states a couple must be married for nine months before a spouse is able to collect benefits from the deceased partner.

The letter stems from and specifically references an Albuquerque man who was denied federal benefits earned by his deceased husband.

Anthony Gonzales* married Mark Johnson in a downtown Albuquerque mass wedding ceremony** in August 2013 that celebrated the first day of legal same-sex marriage recognition in Bernalillo County.

Just six months later, Johnson died from cancer.

After his husband's death, Gonzales applied for survivors benefits through the federal Social Security Administration. Typically, Social Security pays surviving spouses a portion of the deceased's eligible income after they die.

But the federal agency denied Gonzales' application on a technicality—his marriage to Johnson had only lasted six months before Johnson's death. This didn't account for the fact that Gonzales and Johnson were together for 16 years before New Mexico legally recognized same sex marriage.

"It's a matter of fairness. I think Mark and I should be treated like any other couple," Gonzales said. "We paid tens of thousands of dollars into the system."

In her letter, Lujan Grisham points out that Gonzales and Johnson could not have legally married any earlier in New Mexico.

Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham speaking to those in line in a Social Security office in Albuquerque. Courtesy photo.

Anthony Gonzales and Mark Johnson getting married at Albuquerque.

"We understand that the 9 month requirement is intended to reduce the likelihood that people would marry only to receive survivor benefits," Lujan Grisham wrote. "However, Mr. Gonzales and his husband have demonstrated a life-long commitment to each other and were together for 16 years before they married."

After Gonzales appealed the denial, he received a letter in January from Social Security informing him he and Johnson had other options for marriage. Social Security told Gonzales he could have traveled to another state to get married before same sex marriages were legal in New Mexico.

"Straight couples don't have that requirement," Gonzales said.

The Social Security Administration did not respond to emails and phone calls from NM Political Report seeking comment on Gonzales' denial of benefits as of press time.

Kate Kendell, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, told NM Political Report her organization urges the Social Security Administration to accommodate couples like Johnson and Gonzales.

"The U.S. Supreme Court has held that denying same-sex couples marriage equality is unconstitutional," Kendell said. "Denying these surviving [spouses'] benefits continues this unconstitutional discrimination, and the federal government has an obligation to remedy this."

Lujan Grisham suggested making an exemption for "these unique cases" where it was impossible for a couple to be married for nine months or longer.

"Will SSA provide such an exception for these cases?" Lujan wrote. "If not, why not?"

Lujan Grisham's letter is signed by 57 other members of Congress, including Democratic National Committee Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz, a Florida congresswoman.

A spokesman for Lujan Grisham's office said the congresswoman is willing to look into drafting legislation if the federal government doesn't change the rule administratively.

Gonzales said even though the state recognizes his marriage, it isn't going far enough.

"We're still fighting for equal rights, Gonzales said. "It's like we're fighting a never-ending battle."

Political Updates *cont'd from page 3*

high school as the court heard arguments in his case challenging KUSD's discriminatory treatment of him. "For the first time this year, I feel like I can actually make it through my senior year of high school just like any other boy in my class," said 17-year-old Ash Whitaker. "It's awful going to school every day with the constant stress and stigma from being segregated from my peers and from administrators watching my every move just because of who I am. I'm so relieved I'll be able to just go to class, apply to college, and graduate without worrying if I'll get in trouble for using the restroom."

• CO Woman Files Suit

Lorie Smith, owner, 303 Creative LLC, a Denver graphic and web design company, has filed suit in Colorado's U.S. District Court claiming that Colorado law violates her ability to deny business to supporters of same-sex marriage. Her suit also seeks to overturn the state protection law claiming that it is unconstitutional and violates her First and Fourteenth Amendment rights. Smith would like to use her business "to celebrate and promote God's design for marriage as an institution between one man and one woman," according to the suit, and claims her inability to say so on her website because of the state laws violates her rights. However, her website already says so in as many words, despite the lawsuit saying she "is refraining" from expressing her views. "My primary objective is to design and create expressive content," her website reads. "Because of my faith, however, I am selective about the messages that I create or promote – while I will serve anyone I am always careful to avoid communicating ideas or messages, or promoting events, products, services, or organizations, that are inconsistent with my religious beliefs."

• Student Sues School over Homecoming

NBC's Emma Margolin reports that after trying unsuccessfully to take a male date to his homecoming dance in Memphis, Tennessee, former student Lance Sanderson, 19, is suing his Catholic high school under Title IX, arguing it had unlawfully discriminated against him on the basis of his sexual orientation. Sanderson made national headlines last year when he tried to take a boy to the homecoming dance at Christian Brothers High School (CBHS), an all-boys private school. His effort garnered tens of thousands of supporters via a change.org petition but was ultimately defeated. He ended up skipping the dance and was sent home from school days later. When he returned, he said he was called derogatory names by other students. Feeling unwelcome, Sanderson decided to finish his senior year at home, completing his coursework online and missing out on his graduation ceremony.

• Immigration Equality & Brooklyn Pride Center Launch Project

Equality and the Brooklyn Community Pride Center launched the LGBTQ New Americans Project, featuring audio and video oral histories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer immigrants living in Brooklyn and throughout New York City.

Through extended conversation, the project records the unique experiences of LGBTQ immigrants in their own words. Topics and themes include experiences in their country of origin, family life, career, love, sexuality, gender identity, race, the immigration experience, and much more. "Blatant racism and xenophobia have been rampant during this election cycle. This project is a response to that grossly inaccurate depiction of this country. The New Americans Project shares the true personal stories of queer immigrants from around the world building a life in the U.S. The participants are teachers, community organizers, and advocates. They are truly inspiring members of our community," said Aaron C. Morris, Executive Director of Immigration Equality.

• OH Supreme Court to Review HIV Exposure Law

The Ohio Supreme Court will review the HIV criminal law at issue in State of Ohio v. Orlando Batista. Center for HIV Law and Policy, along with fourteen Ohio-based and national HIV, civil liberties, LGBT, social advocacy and criminal justice organizations, signed on as friends of the court in support of appellant Orlando Batista's request for leave to appeal his conviction, under Ohio's HIV exposure law, to Ohio's highest court.

Jeffrey Gamso, the former Legal Director of the ACLU of Ohio Foundation, with assistance from The Center for HIV Law and Policy and the ACLU of Ohio Foundation, submitted a brief supporting the petition for Ohio Supreme Court review. In our brief, we argued that Ohio's felonious assault statute: (1) violates the Equal Protection Clauses of the Ohio and United States Constitutions because it singles out people living with HIV for prosecution in response to conduct that is not criminal in the case of other groups, for example those living with other sexually transmitted diseases; (2) compels speech in violation of the Free Speech Clauses of the First Amendment and the Ohio Constitution; and (3) violates the Americans with Disabilities Act for reasons similar to those in point one.

Helping with Pride volunteers bagged shoes for shelters in partnership with Classic DryCleaners benefiting the Central PA Animal Alliance.

Raising Awareness

cont'd from pg 1

lifestyle and similar interests," Tobin tells *Central Voice*. "It's been an awesome and rewarding experience. At the end of each project I feel personally fulfilled, knowing that our group made a difference in the lives of others."

There are two other angles to Tobin's involvement.

While the LGBT community has become much more accepted over the years, Tobin notes that there are still those individuals who don't view the group as favorable. "Face it, there are people who would love nothing more than to see those of us who are LGBT locked back into the closet," he laments. Helping with Pride is a great way to bring positive visibility to the LGBT community. "You meet us, as a group, volunteering – in some instances – side by side with other groups for one purpose – to help others."

And he is "personally satisfied from being able to spend time with a great group of people" who he now considers friends.

Volunteers assist Dillsburg Library move to their new location

Events

Helping with Pride has completed three events since Woodyard founded the group last April. "We hope to schedule an event for each month," Woodward says. Currently there are about 80 individuals who have expressed interest in participating, 36 people in the group's Facebook Group, of which 10 are active in events.

There is no minimum requirement to volunteer. "Volunteer opportunities will appeal to some, but not all of our volunteers. Individuals can choose the events most suited to their personal likes and abilities," Woodyard explains. They look for suggestions from volunteers.

Organizations that have already benefitted include: Central PA Animal Alliance. The group assisted in bagging shoes for the Alliance's Shoes for Shelter's Campaign; Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, when volunteers bagged 1,200 pounds of green beans for distribution; and volunteers assisted the Dillsburg Library with a move to their new location.

Upcoming events include: American Red Cross, -Smoke Detector Installation, Uptown Harrisburg; Highway Cleanup, Adopt a Highway on Lisburn Rd in the area of the Camp Hill State Prison.

Info: helpingwithpride.org, Facebook, travis@helpingwithpride.org

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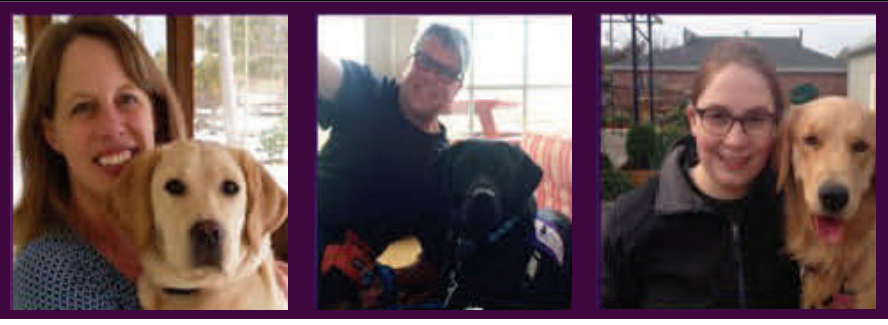

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Alder Health Services

LGBT

Sexual & Gender Minorities:

From Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, M.D.
Director, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities

On behalf of many colleagues who have worked together to make today possible, I am proud to announce the formal designation of sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) as a health disparity population for NIH research. The term SGM encompasses lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations, as well as those whose sexual orientation, gender identity and expressions, or reproductive development varies from traditional, societal, cultural, or physiological norms.

Mounting evidence indicates that SGM populations have less access to health care and higher burdens of certain diseases, such as depression, cancer, and HIV/AIDS. But the extent and causes of health disparities are not fully understood, and research on how to close these gaps is lacking.

In addition, SGM populations have unique health challenges. More research is needed to understand these challenges, such as transgender people taking exogenous hormones.

Progress has been made in recent years, with gains in legal rights and changing

Continued >

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A Health Disparity Population

social attitudes. However, stigmatization, hate-violence, and discrimination are still major barriers to the health and well-being of SGM populations. Research shows that sexual and gender minorities who live in communities with high levels of anti-SGM prejudice die sooner—12 years on average—than those living in more accepting communities.

The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000 authorizes the Director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), in consultation with the director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to define health disparity populations. This month, with strong support from AHRQ Director Andrew Bindman, M.D., I formally designate sexual and gender minorities as a disparity population for research purposes.

...the extent and causes of health disparities are not fully understood, and research on how to close these gaps is lacking.

-Perez-Stable

The designation builds on previous steps by NIH to advance SGM health research. In 2011, the Institute of Medicine (now The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine) published an NIH-commissioned report on LGBT health issues. In response to the report recommendations, NIH extended its research portfolio and created the Sexual and Gender Minority Research Office (SGMRO). The SGMRO, within the Office of the Director, coordinates NIH-supported activities on SGM health issues and provides guidance to researchers within and outside of NIH.

I offer my gratitude to inaugural SGMRO Director Karen L. Parker, Ph.D., M.S.W., and NIH Principal Deputy Director Lawrence A. Tabak, D.D.S., Ph.D., who led the proposal for designation. I also offer my gratitude to colleagues across NIH who served on the NIH-established working group for their careful consideration on this matter.

This designation marks an important and necessary step in realizing NIH's mission to advance the health of all Americans.

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New Opportunities Available for LGBT-Owned Small Businesses

The Department of General Services recently announced that the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities welcomes into the Small Diverse Business community businesses owned by individuals with disabilities (DOBEs) as well as businesses owned by members of the LGBT community (LGBTBEs).

This expansion is all part of both the department's commitment to maximizing inclusion and diversity in our state contracting and the Governor's Executive Order 2015-11 on Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities in Commonwealth Procurement and in Pennsylvania's Economy.

In order for a DOBE or LGBTBE to seek opportunities in state contacting, a business will need to meet the state's eligibility requirements as a "small" business, as well as provide certification of their status as a DOBE from the U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN) or LGBTBE from the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC), national third-party certifying entities for disability-owned businesses, including businesses owned by service-disabled veterans, and LGBT-owned businesses. These entities join several other commonwealth-approved third party certification entities currently in place for the certification of minority, woman, veteran, and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses.

For information, contact the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities at (717) 783-3119 or GS-BDISBO@pa.gov.

The Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Central PA, the Independence Business Alliance and the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce also worked on this effort too. It was a shared effort.

Related News

In related news, the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center recently announced a partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration to provide free monthly workshops for community members interested in starting or growing a business.

The workshops are part of the SBA's Business Smart Toolkit, which helps entrepreneurs understand the basics of business start-up, the essentials of becoming credit-ready, and how and where to find additional resources and support.

All workshops are offered at Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center and are free for participants to attend. Community members are encouraged to RSVP in advance at https://bizsmartbradbury.eventbrite.com.

Sponsors for the first four workshops (through December 2016) include QNB, People First Federal Credit Union, and the LGBT Business Council of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. Workshops are planned for November 16 and December 14 from 2-5pm.

OUT & ABOUT

Imam Urges Diversity at 9/11 Observance

"Don't you see the diversity God has created all around you?" asked Imam Mohamad Bashar Arafat of the 150 people gathered on 15th Anniversary of 9/11. The event's focus was finding ways for various organized religions to find common ground. With twice the number of attendees than expected, the memorial event featured the Sikh Temp Children's Choir, Rabbi Eric Cytryn, of host congregation Beth El Temple; Rabbi Carl Chopper, president, Interfaith Alliance of PA; State Senator Rob Teplitz; State Rep. Patty Kim attended.

Community Center Partners to Provide LGBT Vets Free Assistance

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center will partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide free assistance for LGBT veterans seeking to apply for VA Benefits.

The VA will have a navigator on-site at Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10am until 11:30am to answer questions about VA benefits and to assist veterans with completing their applications for enrollment. The Center is located at 522 W. Maple St., Allentown, PA 18101.

Adrian Shanker, Executive Director of Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, commented, "The LGBT community needs and deserves access to quality healthcare. Ensuring that LGBT veterans know how to enroll for VA benefits is core to the dream of health equity for LGBT people."

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center prioritizes health promotion for the LGBT community. Health Promotion and Outreach Manager, Frankie Potylycki, said, "We want to make sure that our LGBT veterans can access and navigate the VA health benefits they have earned by serving in the armed forces."

Steven Lai, LCSW, from the Department of Veteran's Affairs Medical Center in Allentown stated, "The VA thanks you for your dedication and military service to our country. Please ask all the questions you have about the VA and apply for the benefits you have earned so that we can serve you."

Maryland Businesses Safe Space for LGBT People

The Pride Foundation of Maryland recently launched its LGBT Safe Spaces Project. The project highlights businesses which are safe spaces for LGBT people. Any businesses in Maryland can participate by making a formal commitment to honor the standards outlined below:

1. Make certain all employees will treat every LGBT patron with dignity and respect; which includes equal levels of customer service

2. Make certain all employees refrain from using slurs directed at LGBT people

3. Make certain all employees understand displays of affection by LGBT people are no more or less indecent than similar displays of affection by non-LGBT people

4. Make certain employees will intervene on behalf of LGBT people when these standards are being ignored by other customers and patrons

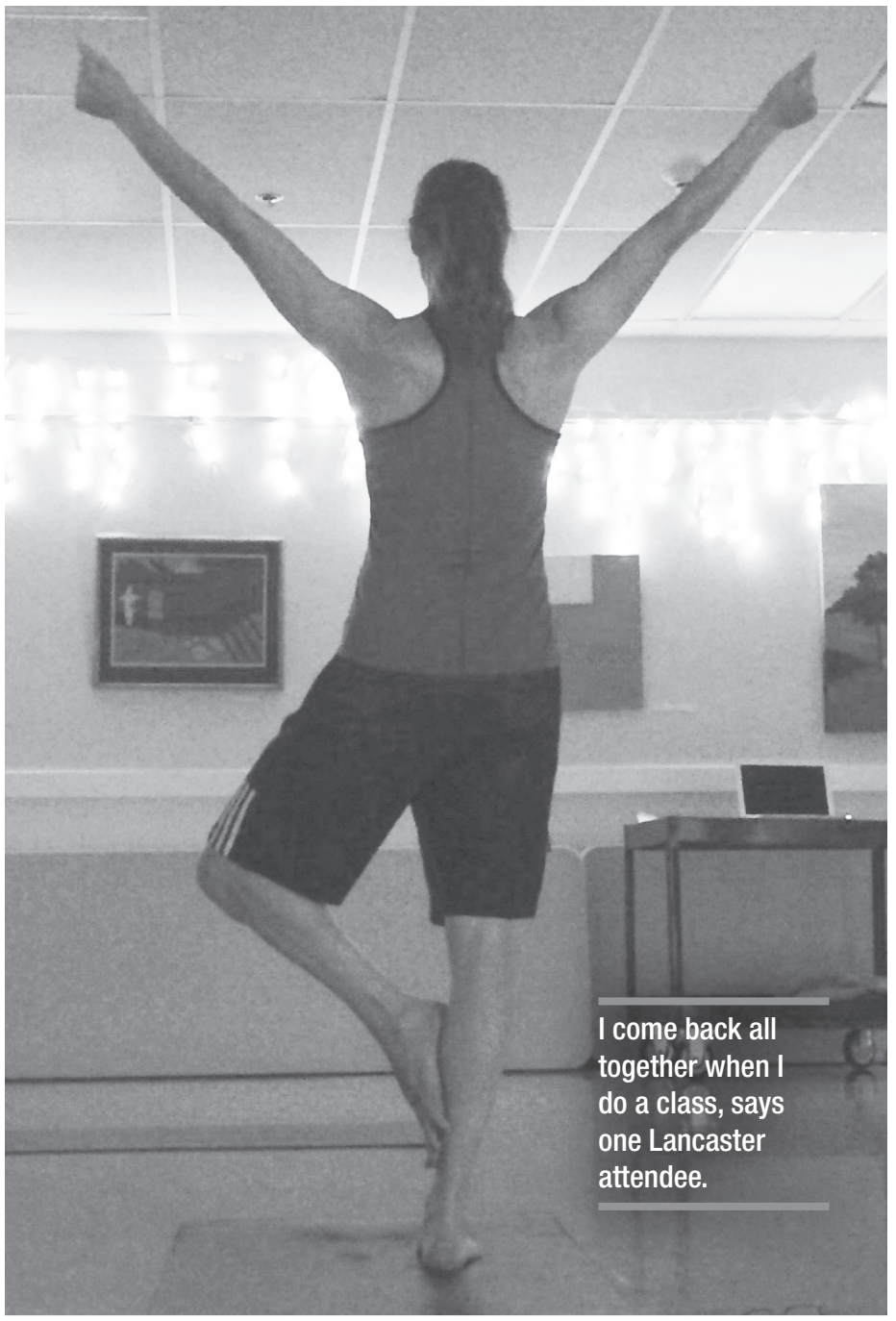
Business owners or general managers are able to complete the online webform "Commitment to be an LGBT Safe Space". Once a business has provided its location and other relevant information, the foundation will include it on the web-based map LGBT Safe Spaces.

"We want to recognize businesses that support our right to dignity. If we only bring attention to businesses after they discriminate against us, then we're never building relationships with all those who appreciate our community," said Brian Gaither, a member of the Pride Foundation's board.

The Foundation encourages LGBT people across the state to identify supportive businesses and to approach them about formalizing their commitment. They will join Chase Brexton Health Care as well as Baltimore's Hotel Brexton, Parts & Labor, and Charmington's – all of whom are already on the map.

Amanda Rothschild of Charmington's said about the program "This is a no-brainer to us. We've had a number of LGBT partners and employees here, and we've been public supporters of LGBT rights since we opened."

Foundation board member Matt Thorn said "If there's even one place in some of Maryland's communities where LGBT people feel safe, that's something we want them to know. Over time, we're confident more businesses will join the program."



Trans & Queer Yoga cont'd from page 1

veterans, survivors of military sexual assault and refugees of war. Foley is co-creator of Battle Body Retraining, a body-based mindfulness series developed to reduce the impact of trauma on post-deployed veterans.

Foley also volunteers with Common Roads, a safe-space for LGBTQ teens, and facilitates the Queer Parenting Group.

"I always feel more connected to my body, to my world when I do yoga," Sarah, 29, tells *Central Voice*. Her mother Ann, 59, feels that "young queer and transgender people don't have a lot of safe places to just be themselves". She has a female trans-gender partner. Sarah's husband Alex, 27, combines yoga with his cross-training and power lifting. "I have less anxiety all around when I do yoga," he says.

Foley is passionate about creating connection and support within the LGBT community.

"I offer these classes as a courageous and safe space for our community to practice self-care and self-love together to our fullest possible expression," Foley says.

Info: Facebook - @transqueeryoga; http://www.alaketherapy.com/AboutKaren.en.html; http://www.zoetropolis.com/yoga/

Yoga class at Lancaster's Unitarian Church, lead by Karen Foley, MA, LPC, far right, who is originally from Chicago.

Rick Schulze, Jay Grandis and Dan Maneval, 3 of the co-founders of ACT UP Central PA

Central PA AIDS Coalition *cont'd from page 1*

plan to formally advocate for HIV services.

Had the PA HHS plan gone into effect, local services - AIDS Resource Alliance and Caring Communities for AIDS - would be headquartered about 150 miles away at Clarion University's Northwest Alliance. "There was no input from people living with HIV or the local agencies involved in the drastic changes that were underway. We did not know if our local services would remain in place, in what fashion or at all," Grandis explains.

That's when they acted up.

"On July 7 a contingent of about 40 people from Clinton and Lycoming Counties went to the state capitol to protest the changes underway," Grandis says, who also penned letters about the controversy to nine media outlets. Burkhart and Schulze met with department officials and legislators.

In preparation for visiting Harrisburg, the group consulted with long-established ACT UP Philly members who were supposed to join the protest but were arrested July 6 at their own protest and therefore unavailable.

"Thanks to the legislators throwing their weight behind the cause" the consolidation plan was called off says. Indications are that the two organizations will continue to provide services on the same basis as they have since their founding.

On the ride home buoyed by their efforts, they formed what was originally called ACT UP Williamsport but quickly renamed ACT UP Central PA in order to better reflect their geography. "We became more than just a protest group, more than just a fleeting thing," Grandis says.

Since organizing, the group has connected with United Churches of Lycoming County about how to reach faith communities and youth about HIV prevention.

More efforts are percolating.

"We need to restart the HIV conversation. Connect it to health and wellness and how to prevent infection," Schulze says. "As a community, especially gay men, we have no sexual health tools readily available". Schulze underscores a complacency that has taken root in gay male circles about HIV and other sexual transmitted infections. "We must act in our own behalf to teach health and wellness," he stresses.

In accepting a GLAAD Media Award for *How to Survive a Plague,* activist and film subject Peter Staley said, "Gay men are only about 2% of the U.S. population, but we're the fastest growing group of new infections, 63% of total infections in recent years. Why aren't these numbers shocking us?"

University of Pittsburgh researcher Ronald Stall says if current trends continue 50 percent of African-American men who turned 18 in 2009 and have sex with men will be HIV+ by age 35. Fifty-four percent of all men who have sex with men will be HIV-positive.

"We're making progress, little by little, with the prevention message. We're doing things one step at a time," Grandis says. In the ACT UP tradition of organizing by consensus, Grandis says "We're a team and that's the only way we operate."

"I'm not entirely sure where the group would like to go next. The sky's the limit!" Grandis forecasts.

The group held a Halloween fundraiser dance to help pay for attaining nonprofit status.

ACT UP

AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power

Central PA

ACT UP Central PA Mission: "We are a diverse, nonpartisan group of individuals united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis. We protest and demonstrate. We meet with government and public health officials. We research and distribute the latest medical information.
We are not silent."

PA Sierra Club Pushes for Redistricting

By Central Voice

Why would an environmental group like the PA Sierra Club push for political redistricting?

"Because the ability of citizens to advocate for a clean environment is undermined by gerrymandering that creates legislative and Congressional districts that are uncompetitive and impervious to the will of their constituents," explains Wendi Taylor, political chairwoman, Harrisburg Group of the PA Sierra Club.

Redistricting is needed because gerrymandered districts reflect uneven representation, and the public is losing faith in our democracy, Taylor says. "When the public is cut out of the process, those in power use gerrymandering to protect their power and insulate themselves from accountability to their constituents," she says.

Wendi Taylor, political chairwoman, Harrisburg Group of the PA Sierra Club

Proponents of redistricting point out that the boundaries of political districts "ignore changes in demographics, weaken communities of color that are already disproportionately affected by pollution, and feed into the public sentiment that all government is corrupt," Taylor says.

"When the lines are drawn to purposely block certain people out, polluters and other big money interests win," Taylor says. "The party in power, which draws the districts in their favor, may oppose redistricting reform, as well as those lawmakers who currently benefit from safe districts."

Who wins, who loses?

"Communities whose representation have traditionally been consolidated into a few voting districts, like communities of color, will benefit from more fairly drawn districts," Taylor says.

Average citizens win with redistricting, proponents say, because redrawn representation is more responsive to their issues. "Fairer districts mean fairer representation and will naturally reduce the effect of powerful lobbyists," Taylor says, adding "the weight of big money will have to be balanced by elected officials against the will of their constituents. When the two collide, the lawmaker will have to choose a side and be held accountable."

Do lopsided districts create lopsided results?

"When districts are too safe, few people will challenge an incumbent in a safe district because no one has the time and money to waste on race that cannot be won," Taylor says. That limits the choice of all the voters in the district.

In Pennsylvania, for example, there are 228 seats in the Legislature (203 House and 25 Senate) up for re-election in November. Only 119 of these races have opponents. Of those, only a few are considered competitive. "That is the result of gerrymandering, not necessarily voter satisfaction," Taylor says.

Taylor also points out that while Democrats enjoy a more than 900,000 voter edge over Republicans in Pennsylvania, 31 of 50 of the Senators and 119 of 203 of the state House members are Republicans. As of August 2016, 37.8 percent of Pennsylvania's voters are registered Republicans, while 73.9 percent of the seats in the General Assembly are held by Republicans. "That's gerrymandering," she says.

What's the solution?

In its messaging the PA Sierra Club understands that every state is different and has to decide for itself how to accomplish redistricting reform.

The PA Sierra Club adheres to redistricting principles written by a diverse coalition of 16 civil rights and democracy organizations led by Common Cause. Each reform proposal must conform to some basic principles, such as:

Full and accurate counts of all communities during the Census

Protection of communities of color

Elimination of prison gerrymandering. Prisoners should be counted based on their residency before being imprisoned, not counted in the place they are being held.

Strong considerations of communities of interest.

Open process and accessible meetings of decision-makers and access to information about any non-public discussions concerning redistricting.

Full disclosure of interests and conflicts of interests among those drawing the districts.

Outreach to communities and access to redistricting tools to allow meaningful public participation.

For Taylor, the process does not stop there. As she goes around soliciting signatures for redistricting reform, her sense is that people are ready for change.

"I have carried many petitions over the years and this petition on redistricting has been the easiest to collect signatures," Taylor notes. "Almost everyone, who has been asked, has signed it. The public understands that democracy starts there."

Even her five grandchildren get the message. "When they turn 18, I give them a voter registration form," she says. "We all have to participate for the system to work well," she concludes.

Rosemary Browne

Diane Jefferson

FAB Celebrates the Accomplishments of Three Central PA Honorees

With a new twist on the party, FAB (Fall Acheivement Benefit) honored Rosemary Browne, Diane Jefferson and Pride Festival of Central PA at the William Penn Museum, Harrisburg.

The formal portion of the evening – video presentations about awardees followed by remarks - lasted about one hour. For the rest of evening attendees were free to mingle, enjoy food and refreshments, and bid on Silent Auction gifts.

• ROSEMARY BROWNE

Rosemary Browne has more than 30 years' experience in the nonprofit and government sectors working to improve the quality of life of residents of South Central Pennsylvania. Since 2014, she has proudly served as President & CEO of Alder Health Services whose mission is to improve the health and well-being of persons living with HIV/AIDS and members of the LGBTQ+ community in a culturally competent, affirming and empowering environment. The agency provides behavioral health, primary care, case management and support services, education, prevention and wellness services, and HIV/STD testing. She serves on a number of regional and state collaboratives and community partnerships that work to reduce health disparities and advance social justice issues that affect the LGBT community.

Prior to joining Alder Health, Rosemary was Program Officer for Highmark Foundation where she managed grants and population-based health initiatives addressing emerging community health needs targeting uninsured and underserved populations in twenty-one South Central Pennsylvania counties. These initiatives included the Foundation's investment of more than $2 million in grant funding for a statewide coalition that used a public health approach to reduce bullying in PA schools and communities, and the design of a of $1.5 million strategy for school-community partnerships throughout a 49-county service area to reduce childhood obesity.

Rosemary spent ten years with The Foundation for Enhancing Communities as Director of Programs & Community Investment providing oversight for all regional grantmaking and scholarship programs, and key leadership for a number of special projects and initiatives. These programs and projects represented more than $30 million of investments in grant-funded community services and tuition assistance to hundreds of area college-bound students. In her role at TFEC, she had the privilege of working with numerous community, private and corporate foundations both regionally and nationally.

The breadth of Rosemary's experience in the nonprofit sector crosses a number of disciplines and affinity groups. She has a deep passion for and commitment to making connections in the community to address challenges related to reducing health disparities among underserved populations, particularly persons living with HIV, the LGBT community, communities of color, and women.

Rosemary serves on a number of nonprofit boards and advisory committees including Goodwill Keystone Area Foundation, The Foundation for Enhancing Communities' Women's Fund, and the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg.

She is the proud mother of two sons and lives in the Harrisburg area with her dog, Miles.

• DIANE JEFFERSON

Rev. Diane L. Jefferson, is the pastor of Bethel Cito AMEC in McConnellsburg, Pa. She has served at Cito for the past 15 years initially as Supply Pastor. In May, 2000 she received her ordination as Deacon and was appointed to serve as Pastor of Bethel Cito.

Rev. Jefferson is also the Director of Multicultural Student Affairs at Shippensburg University where she has played an active role in the community for over 30 plus years. Through her hard work and determination, she has helped young people achieve in spite of the odds. As she travels nationally and internationally her message is clear, "God has equipped each of us with what we need to excel. When in doubt Just listen and learn."

She is a Pastor, teacher, author, presenter/facilitator, activist, motivational speaker and mother of Shanda R. Jefferson. She has received numerous awards and honors including the Governor's Commission on African American Affairs Award for Outstanding Educators. As well as the Outstanding Women of America Award.

Known as an honest, down to earth woman, Rev. Jefferson travels across the country, giving words of encouragement and inspiration to all people. She has led a life that has moved her form Brokenness to Blessedness and she revels in the fact that God sustains and maintains her coming in and her going out!

• PRIDE FESTIVAL OF CENTRAL PA

Since 1992, Pride Festival of Central PA has held an annual festival each summer to promote awareness and showcase organizations and business available to the LGBT and straight ally community. Pride Festival weekend provides several safe environments for people of the LGBT and straight ally community to celebrate their diversity and support local economic growth by partnering with the community and attracting individuals to Central Pennsylvania. The festival regularly attracts 5,000 people to downtown Harrisburg. Pride Festival of Central PA is a project of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities.

FAB is a key source of funding for The LGBT Center of Central PA, including youth program Common Roads and annual youth conference, Aging with Pride initiative, cultural competency training for schools and social service agencies, an award-winning LGBT History Project, and arts and culture events focusing on educating the community about LGBT people, experiences, and issues.

FAB event photos courtesy TransCentralPA

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Jewelry Designer Jude Sharp Toast of the Town

By Central Voice

Jude Sharp is a name synonymous with high quality jewelry design. She's been crafting her designs for nearly 50 years. Lately, Sharp has been the toast of the town.

During the month of September, the LGBT Center in Harrisburg exhibited "ART/history: a retrospective exhibit on the career of jewelry designer Jude Sharp" as part of 3rd in the Burg. The exhibit was a selection of photographs of Sharp's creations from her nearly 50-year career as a jewelry designer and craftsperson. A portion of the exhibit described the creative process she follows and showed her working in her studio/workshop. Mementos of Sharp's life and career were also displayed.

October 11, the center screened Sharp's oral history interview and she was on hand to answer questions about her life and career as a lesbian artist.

Sharp is a native of Pennsylvania and has lived several towns and cities in the state nearly all of her life, with brief periods living in Colorado, Utah and California before settling in Lancaster in 1979, originally there in 1976, and opening her jewelry store.

She is a graduate of the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia where she majored in jewelry design and fabrication. She started working from home and selling her jewelry at craft shows, and later opened a series of retail shops, leading to a 50-year career.

As an openly lesbian artist, frequent advertiser in LGBT publications and a vendor at numerous LGBT pride festivals, Sharp is well known to LGBT people throughout the region.

These days, Sharp takes great satisfaction and pride in seeing LGBT couples among her customers who have been together for many years and are finally able to get married and come to her to create their custom wedding rings. She lives in Lancaster with her beautiful dog Quincy.

All photos by John Powl of Under the Bridge Productions

FILM REVIEW: THE QUEEN HAS NO CROWN

Showing Israel from a Different Point of View

By Alan Kennedy-Shaffer

Tomer Heymann's "obsession" with communicating "through the camera" is on full display in his 2011 coming out and coming of age film, "The Queen Has No Crown." At once writer, director, and lead actor, Heymann's compilation of footage from 1991-2005 is intentionally intrusive. The story is simple: an Israeli family is torn apart when three of five brothers depart their homeland and aging mother for opportunities in America, leaving behind two brothers, one of whom is gay.

In an interview with *Central Voice* following a screening at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Center co-sponsored by the newly launched UC Health LGBTQ Mental Health Clinic, Heymann said his main goal in making the film was to show Israel "from a different point of view." In that, he certainly succeeded, presenting a poignant, award-winning piece about the intersection of family, bigotry, mental health, personal and political turmoil, and acceptance.

Chronological rather than thematic, the film starts with Heymann's grandfather's escape to Israel from Berlin and early video footage. After service in the Israeli Army and discussion of his parent's divorce after 33 years of marriage, Heymann comes out to his twin Erez, then the rest of his family, causing a brother to remark, "Biologically, you're useless." Heymann said he was inspired to come out by his "beautiful" gay uncle, who committed suicide by on his 50th birthday.

Heymann's struggle for acceptance as an openly gay man in a conservative village in Israel at times parallels the broader struggle between those who support expansion and those opposed to government intervention in what are referred to by Heymann as the "occupied territories." Not long after coming out, Heymann starts going to protests against Israeli action in Gaza and West Bank. He sinks into depression, however, when he and his longtime boyfriend, Erez, break up.

Heymann said that the worst moment for his mother was when a woman at the Jerusalem Gay Parade said, "You're worse than the Nazis." A rock shatters the windshield of Heymann's car and bigotry abounds, so Heymann travels to America, visiting his three expat brothers – Ofer, Alon, and Erez – and filming a New York City Pride Parade, which Heymann finds "intoxicating." He even considers making an "Arab" man his boyfriend because they are "so culturally similar."

> **...the worst moment for his mother was when a woman at the Jerusalem Gay Parade said, "You're worse than the Nazis."**

Writer and director Tomer Heymann explains to Central Voice his "obsession" with communicating "through the camera" at a Denver screening.

Meanwhile, back in Israel, Heymann's mother "cries everyday" out of longing for the return of her other three sons. Upon Tomer's return, he is welcomed with shouts of "Gays go away!" Yet, Heymann's personal life becomes more stable, as his mother becomes increasingly accepting. His mother, in a turning point, says that she could not imagine her filmmaker son not being gay.

The film's significance as one of the first movies by an Israeli filmmaker about being gay during the 1990's and early 2000's is not ignored by Heymann, but neither is it entirely welcomed. The focus on the family led to mixed reactions in the Israeli LGBTQ community, and to an explicit statement by Heymann at the screening that "I am not the face of the gay community in Israel."

Yet despite Heymann's disclaimers, the film's political implications are impossible not to notice. The title references the refrain of a popular Hebrew song by Leah Goldberg, "My Poor Beautiful Homeland," specifically the line, "The Queen has no home; the King has no crown." Heymann's play on words is consistent with his unique approach and ambivalence about his place. Asked to sum it up, Heymann said, "The country changed and now we need to talk about the future."

Art Association of Harrisburg
5-ARTIST INVITATIONAL EXHIBITION
THROUGH NOV. 23
featuring paintings, photographs & drawings by Audrey Bordonaro, Klint Ericson, John Firestone, Jeanne McKinney, Erna Tunno.
HOLIDAY EXHIBITION
DEC. 2-JAN. 5
featuring photographs & paintings by J.Arthur Davis, Karen Kaiser, Christopher Lyter, Bob McCormick, Michele Taber.
Opening reception Friday, Dec. 2,5-8 pm
"REVEILLON REDUX – HOLIDAY SOIRÉE"
DEC. 3, 5-8 PM
Hosted by Tracey Meloni, suburban Harrisburg, featuring paintings by Bill Kocher, photos by Jeff Wiles, glass mosaics by Josephine Alexander.
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Acrylic, Pastel, Charcoal, Watercolor, Oil:
Art Association's New Show

Mixed media and acrylic paintings by Audrey Bordonaro, pastels and charcoal drawings by Klint Ericson, oils by John Firestone, pastel paintings by Jeanne McKinney, and watercolors by Erna Tunno will show at The Art Association of Harrisburg through Nov. 23.

Audrey Bordonaro of Schuylkill Haven studied interior design at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn before receiving her BS in art education from Indiana University of PA. Employed by the Blue Mountain School District, Orwigsburg, PA, for 36 years, Bordonaro resumed her love of creating art after her retirement. Her art is influenced by her life experiences through nature, music, words/poetry, feelings and emotions. She says that her approach is very intuitive as she strives to go beyond the obvious. Her work consists of both representational and abstract pieces, and is fascinated with experimenting with a variety of media.

Audrey Bondonaro's Untitled

Klint Ericson's pastels examine American landscape traditions and the complex ways we create, experience, and represent place. Instead of idealizing landscapes and concealing their social implications, in many of his pieces Ericson places roads, fences, electrical poles and buildings in the foreground, as visible traces of the "legal, social, and cultural norms" structuring those places. Ericson avers that he intends his "naturalistic technique and strategic disruptions to draw viewers into a deeper contemplation of the making and taking of American places." His figurative paintings offer opportunities for multilayered "meditations on classic narratives from Old Master scenes, transforming and reimaging old stories through contemporary settings." He says that titles and frames are additional "signifiers, inflecting the meaning of my paintings, and rather than relying upon them to delimit and explain, I use these devices to expand and complicate allusive trails of meaning, drawing on novels, song lyrics, news reportage, and academic texts."

John Firestone says that while preparing for the AAH exhibition, he went to extreme measures to paint one of his favorite places, namely, Range View from Shenandoah National Park. He took some extra courses and learned new techniques for composing a large-scale painting, even doing numerous practice paintings for each section of the canvas. He began blocking in major shapes using photo references as guide, and tenaciously followed through until he had achieved a level of success he had never experienced before in his work. The herculean effort, however, caused him to go into a depression, and he didn't paint again for months. He states that the paintings that he wants to make in the future will be "reflections of the better parts of the world I am impressed by, mixed with my own decisions, changing perspectives, hesitations, and life choices. "Firestone goes on to explain that "from somewhere between those outer and inner poles, I hope to produce tokens of paint that are what they are, and not what I hoped they would be."

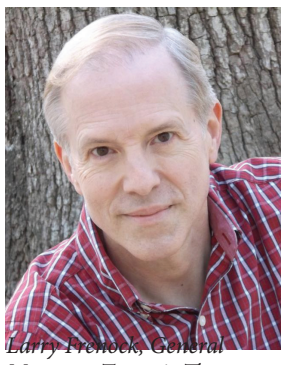
Jeanne Black McKinney, born in Buffalo, NY, graduated from Penn State University with a degree in art, and also studied at Moore College of Art in Philadelphia. Her earliest artistic influence was her grandfather, Baltimore artist Edward S. Black. After raising her five children, McKinney has returned to painting, with her work reflecting her intense interest and appreciation of the natural world. Mckinney works primarily outdoors, trying to capture the essence of a scene. She avers that she is especially concerned with the health of our regional waterways, and is partnering with community groups that promote conservation and improvements. She believes that painting, "like flyfishing, is a life-long and delightful learning experience – an artistic journey of truth and discovery."

Erna Tunno, European born, admires the Great Masters. Like the Luminists, she is constantly aware of the inter-play of light and its effects. She absorbs and enjoys the beauty that surrounds her, and she strives to capture it on paper for others to enjoy, "wishing to delight the senses and elevate the spirit." Tunno's paintings contain a tranquility and beauty uniquely her own. Born in Germany, Tunno came to the US in 1950. She began painting in oils but fell in love with watercolors over 30 years ago. She has studied with many nationally and internationally-known artists, and enjoys teaching and giving seminar. With homes in both PA and South Carolina, Tunno delights in capturing the beauty of both areas as well as areas experienced in her travels.

Info: www.artassocofhbg.com; 717-236-1432

Gretna Theatre's Larry Frenock Now with Tectonic Theater Project

By Frank Pizzoli



Larry Frenock, General Manager, Tectonic Theater Project

"I'll be yanking the chains and pulling levers," Larry Frenock tells *Central Voice*. He is the new general manager at the world-renowned Tectonic Theater Project.

Founded in 1991 by Moisés Kaufman and Jeffrey LaHoste, TTP is an award-winning company whose plays have been performed around the world. Their best known plays are the original The Laramie Project, The Laramie Project – 10 Years Later, Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde, and I Am My Own Wife, now a film.

Frenock's arrival on the project's scene makes for a dynamic set of creative circumstances.

Until recently, Frenock was producing artistic director for 10 years at Gretna Theatre. Over the course of his career, he has appeared in plays, films, television commercials, corporate videos and musicals all over the US, including the Off-Broadway musical Mack the Knife, the Life and Music of Bobby Darin.

In his spare time, Frenock is an amateur figure skater, winning eight gold medals at the US Adult National Figure Skating Championships, including two golds in the spring of 2016.

And therein lies the creative juxtaposition – he's essentially a "dance and movement" guy now managing a globally-celebrated theatre project known for its deeply serious dramatic presentations of the human condition.

"I'll be able to apply my dance and movement experience in how the company views dramatic scenes, how they convey them, move from one to another in a telescopic fashion well known to dancers and choreographers," Frenock says.

In developing plays, the project has honed a hyper naturalism. For example, when preparing the text of the original Laramie Project, company members stayed in Laramie, WY, for one year talking to members of the community, trail participants, people in the middle of and on the sidelines of Matthew Shepard's death. What playgoers heard was as close to reality theatre as a dramaturg could present.

"Besides all the business and administrative duties, I'll also have a role in applying my movement background to the deeply dramatic style of the project," Frenock says.

The project's current undertaking – Uncommon Sense – is about autism. Frenock's addition to the masthead will no doubt add to the presentation.

The autism piece has been in development for several years. "It's an inside/outside perspective, we will portray from the inside out what it's like to be autistic," Frenock explains. There are initial runs in Iowa in January.

LGBT Mural Planned for Arts Center

The struggles and successes of the LGBTQ civil rights movement will be depicted in a mural that is slated to adorn one of the area's most progressive cultural centers.

The Harrisburg Midtown Arts Center (H•MAC) will be the recipient of a mural documenting those historical landmarks. Funds for the project were raised during the month of October. The funds will benefit the Charles Bruce Foundation.

The Charles Bruce Foundation is one of central Pennsylvania's newest and most dynamic charities. Its mission is to expand access to the arts by supporting area writers, artists and musicians (WAM!).

Carlisle native and local artist Aron Rook is tapped for the mural project.

Rook has shown a number of works throughout the region, namely at Time Bomb, Thought Lot Contemporary Arts Center and CALC. Rook earned a degree in illustration and fine arts from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). She just completed a mural this summer on Harrisburg's Third Street in the downtown area.

Among other progressive positions taken by their management, H•MAC actively recruits and employs transgendered staff.

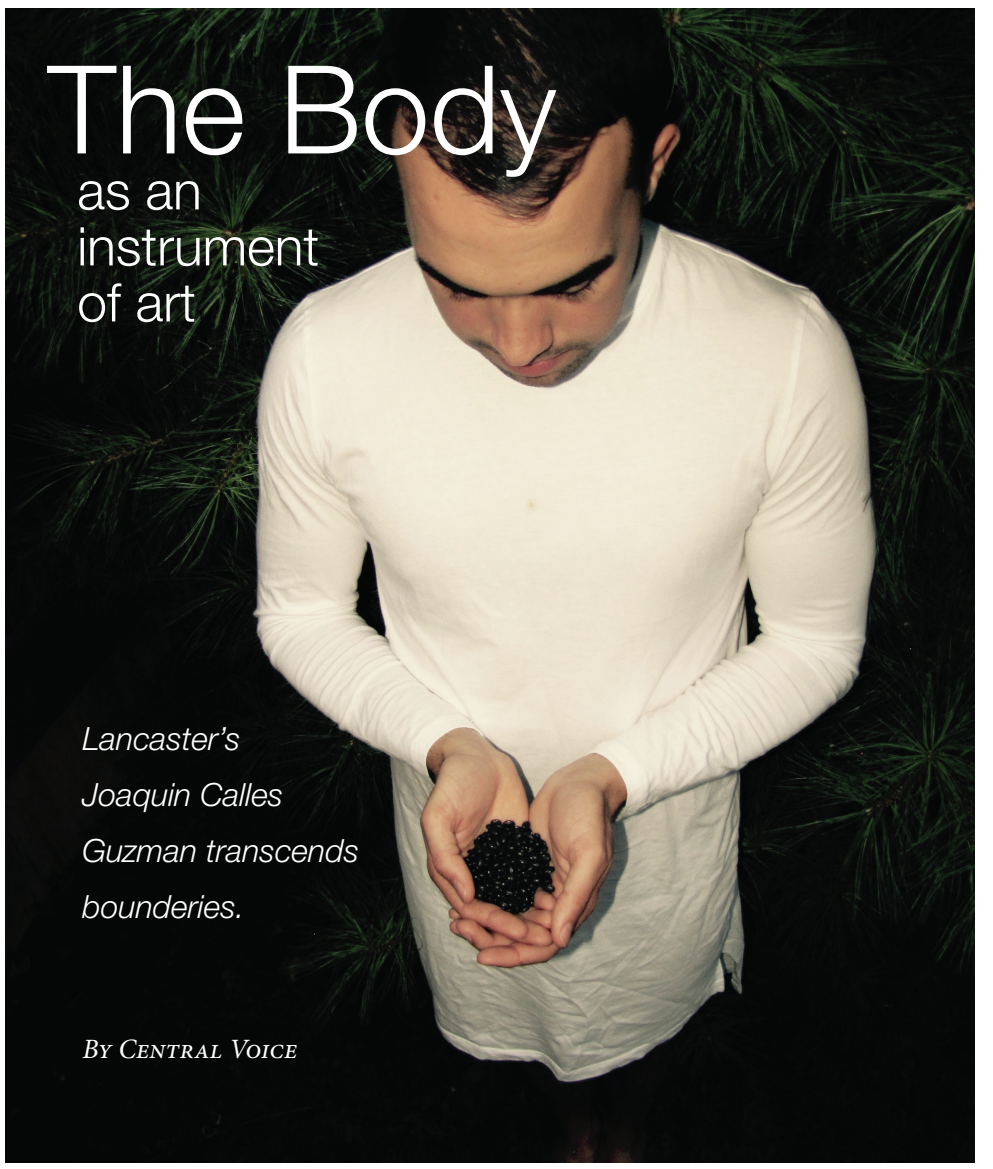
All-Female Lesbian and Feminist Chorus

Central Pannsylvania Womyn's Chorus, the mid-state's only all-female lesbian and feminist chorus, will present concerts Nov.19, 7:30 p.m. at the Mechanicsburg Presbyterian Church, Mechanicsburg, and 4:00PM on Sunday, November 20, 4 p.m. at the Colonial Park United Church of Christ, Harrisburg.

The concert theme is Calling All Directions.

Under the direction of artistic director Jordan R. Markham, who trained at the Peabody Conservatory, the chorus will perform an evening of music that runs the gamut from pop to classical, and everything in between.

Info: (717) 564-0112



Lancaster's Joaquin Calles Guzman is not your typical artist. He uses his body as an instrument of art. He's all in.

"My work is informed by an inherent need to connect to others, as well as to try to ease other's pain or worries," he tells Central Voice. His sense of compassion towards people is sometimes burdensome "because sometimes you are small, and can only do so much, yet you try," he explains.

Some of his performance art and videos are born out of Guzman's need to connect with others.

"Meditation and introspection allow me to engage in a much deeper level than I would otherwise," he says. By being fully present, he seeks to speak to an audience in a more meaningful way. "This places me in a vulnerable position, yet I never feel as such, mainly because people can recognize this honest attempt and they also want to connect, and be present," he says.

During a performance, Guzman's meditative state allows him to enter into a "performance mode, a place where I am able to push and transcend boundaries," he explains. He is then able, for example, to stand for hours at a time with minimal movement, or to repeat an action over and over during the course of a performance. "Without being fully present and engaged this would not be possible, at least not in a way that would be relatable and truthful," he says.

Guzman also meditates separately from his crafted art form.

"I mediate to bring awareness to the now, something that we do not do very often or at all," he observes.

"Only in the present moment can we truly live, perceive, breathe. It is a fertile ground the present, and it is also a place for compassion and truth," he notes. He feels that in a world plagued by fast messaging, social media, fast food, and horrific news, we always have the now, "a space for being ourselves, free and true." When people meditate, Guzman says, they are engaged "beyond the superficiality of ordinary circumstances, able to see and hear so much more".

Even though Guzman freely shares his art form, he is not interested in "teaching" anyone.

"My work is very exploratory in nature, my performances sometimes are born out of my intuition and a calling within myself. Once I start, even though I have defined a method for what I will be doing, I do not know what will happen exactly or how I will react," he says.

He mainly wants to provide a space for silence, growth and transformation. "I have very limited time with each individual member of the audience, who often comes and looks for less than minute before heading away. That is why I have to be present fully for them during those 30, 50 seconds, to provide them with that openness. I want those who come to my performances to see me, I want them to be, there, with me, for 10 seconds, or 4 hours," Guzman says.

Upcoming: Suenos/Dreams (Installation) - Collaboration with Nate Rivera as part of La Luz de La Gente exhibition running until Dec. 17

LGBT community center coalition

By Louie Marven
Executive Director

Housing and homelessness emerge as issues

Housing and homelessness emerged from discussions by 100 participants at the center's first LGBT Aging Conference Oct. 1 at Elizabethtown College.

A first for the region, attendees heard an address from Pennsylvania's physician general Dr. Rachel Levine on Health Aging for the LGBT Community.

They participated in workshops on sex and aging, generational differences in coming out, fraud, end of life planning, and creating inclusive services for LGBT seniors. Partners from Alder Health Services, AARP Pennsylvania, Hospice & Community Care, and Hospice of Central Pennsylvania joined.

The closing session involved a panel discussion during lunch with participants engaging with the panelists on topics directly related to the workshops they presented at the conference, a specific area of concern emerged as the focus of the discussion: housing.

The discussion included questions and comments like these:

How do we stop other residents in long-term care facilities from harassing LGBT people they're sharing living space with?

What about developing transgender-friendly housing options?

I know of three people who are either currently homeless or about to become homeless.

Panelists shared their thoughts on housing, but mostly other conference attendees chimed in with resources they knew about in central Pennsylvania and ideas for how to engage existing services and institutions. One person traveled to the event from Philadelphia, and he shared information on how the John C. Anderson Apartments, an urban LGBT-friendly senior 62+ apartment community, was developed.

During this exchange, I realized that the discussions we were having about LGBT older adults had strong parallels to conversations of concerns around LGBT youth homelessness. Some figures show that up to 40% of youth experiencing homelessness in larger urban areas identify as LGBT, representing a significantly larger percentage than that of LGBT youth in the general population. We also know from data collected by the Movement Advancement Project (www.lgbtmap.org) that housing insecurity and homelessness impact transgender individuals and LGBT people of color at disproportionate rates as well.

So we were dealing with an issue – housing and homelessness – that has intersectional implications to the various LGBT communities in central Pennsylvania and beyond. We have a lot in common as a community. Applying an intersectional lens to what we typically think of as LGBT issues can help build coalitions that can make our movement stronger, and we can achieve a lot of progress if we start by listening to concerns expressed by specific communities and think broadly to identify the common threads.

The mission of the LGBT Center of Central PA is to create common ground for the LGBT community and allies in central Pennsylvania by providing services through educational, cultural, and community activities that foster wholeness.

Inaugural LGBTQ Aging Conference

Between 1999 and 2030, the older minority population, aged 65+, is projected to increase by 217 percent, compared with 81% for older white population. In addition, the number of older LGBT individuals continue to increase and that many face discrimination based on their age and sexual orientation. With that data in mind, the inaugural LGBTQ Aging Conference presented by the LGBT Center of Central PA with support from Elizabethtown College and AARP of Pennsylvania took place Oct. 1. The event was for LGBTBTQ community members ages 50+ and professionals in the aging service provider network.

Who Funds Anti-gay Campaigns?

Freedom for All Americans recently launched a virtual resource and infographic illustrating the interwoven relationships between anti-LGBT activists and organizations working to pass laws that harm LGBT people. The resource, titled "Enemies of Equality," can be found here: *www.freedomforallamericans.org/EnemiesOfEquality.*

It is crystal clear that the vast number of anti-LGBT bills we've seen pop up in state legislatures across the country this past year aren't spontaneous, grassroots attacks on our community," said Matt McTighe, executive director of Freedom for All Americans. "These anti-LGBT bills stem from a highly coordinated effort directed by a handful of well-funded national organizations on a deep-pocketed mission to demonize and harm gay and transgender Americans. These aren't new actors - this network worked hard to foment hateful discrimination by denying LGBT people the freedom to marry. The American people and lawmakers should not be fooled - these organizations are old hands at this kind of hidden dirty work and it is crucial to expose and defeat their efforts to discriminate against LGBT citizens."

Top three anti-LGBT organizations with a combined budget of more than $150 million in 2014:

ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM
FOR FAITH. FOR JUSTICE

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL
SINCE 1983

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

The infographic details the links between anti-LGBT groups such as the Alliance Defending Freedom, the Family Research Council, and Focus on the Family/Family Policy Alliance, and how their funders, board members, and staff intersect and interact. Collectively, the top three anti-LGBT organizations – ADF, Family Research Council and Focus on the Family – had a combined budget of more than $150 million in 2014.

As detailed in FFAA's new, interactive webpage, the ADF network is expansive: its influence includes state-based organizations (often a state-based "Family Institute" or "Policy Counsel") to push out its messaging at the local level and organize grassroots action. Their network includes more than 3,000 affiliated lawyers across the country who work to defend individuals and organizations seeking to discriminate against LGBT people and their families -- for example, the attorney Mat Staver of the anti-LGBT firm the Liberty Counsel defended Kim Davis, the county clerk who refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples following the Supreme Court's historic ruling.

The ADF network also includes a lobbying machine that is capable of blasting out model policies to lawmakers in states all across the country. Over the past year, 17 bills in 14 different states that aim specifically to discriminate against transgender people have language that is nearly identical to model policy language provided by the Alliance Defending Freedom.

A congressional House committee is expected to hold a hearing on the First Amendment Defense Act (FADA), a sweeping piece of discriminatory legislation that would allow businesses and government contractors to deny services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. The language of that bill also mirrors that of state-level FADAs introduced in places like Georgia and Mississippi earlier this year.

Freedom for All Americans is the bipartisan campaign to secure full nondiscrimination protections for LGBT people nationwide. Our work brings together Republicans and Democrats, businesses large and small, people of faith, and allies from all walks of life to make the case for comprehensive nondiscrimination protections that ensure everyone is treated fairly and equally.

West York Mayor Provokes Strong Response; Resigns

"Every person that voted for him knowing how he felt...are all part of why this man felt he could get away with these threatening posts..."
-Carla Christopher

By Central Voice

Carla Christopher, primary organizer of York's Equality Fest, and regional field organizer for Put People First – Pennsylvania.

A day after West York City Council accepted his resignation, embattled West York Mayor Charles Wasko said he did not resign, according to the York Daily Record. "I never signed a letter of resignation."

The borough council voted unanimously Oct. 17 to accept Wasko's resignation after voting unanimously Oct. 3 to censure him over his Facebook page posts.

One post depicted apes with captions referring to President Obama and his family. Another post was an image of a wagon full of orangutans referring to "moving day" at the White House. One post referred to lynching.

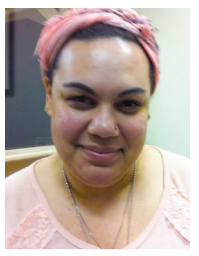
Council President Shawn Mauck now takes over as mayor.

Wasko's posts stirred the community to action.

Speaking at a 100-plus, packed public airing of reaction to Wasko's posts, Carla Christopher, told Central Voice "Wasko is mentally unfit for the job of mayor". Christopher is, among other duties, primary organizer of York's Equality Fest, and regional field organizer for Put People First – Pennsylvania.

"He is not willing to do his job of protecting all citizens," she says.

"These types of prejudiced views develop from a myriad of sources - the overheard words of parents and teachers and respected authority figures," Christopher offers. She points to "biased history books, negative media portrayals, a lack of exposure to the larger world and a fear of the unknown" as the origins of prejudiced views.



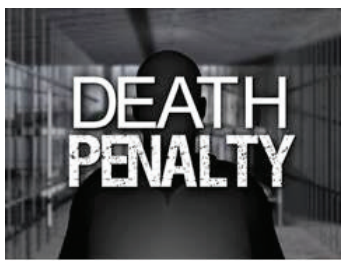
Carla Christopher, primary organizer of York's Equality Fest, and regional field organizer for Put People First – Pennsylvania.

Christopher says, "Every person that voted for him, knowing how he felt about minority groups, every neighbor who rolled their eyes or laughed or remained silent when he told his racist jokes, they are all part of why this man felt he could get away with these threatening posts and with defending them to the media."

With oversight for the police department and enforcement of city ordinances, Christopher wonders "that a single black or brown person feels safe under his watch, feels confident that their rights and safety will be protected" by Wasko.

For Christopher, "the only acceptable outcome for Mayor Wasko at this point is removal from office."

A Black Eye for Pennsylvania's Death Sentence Prosecutions



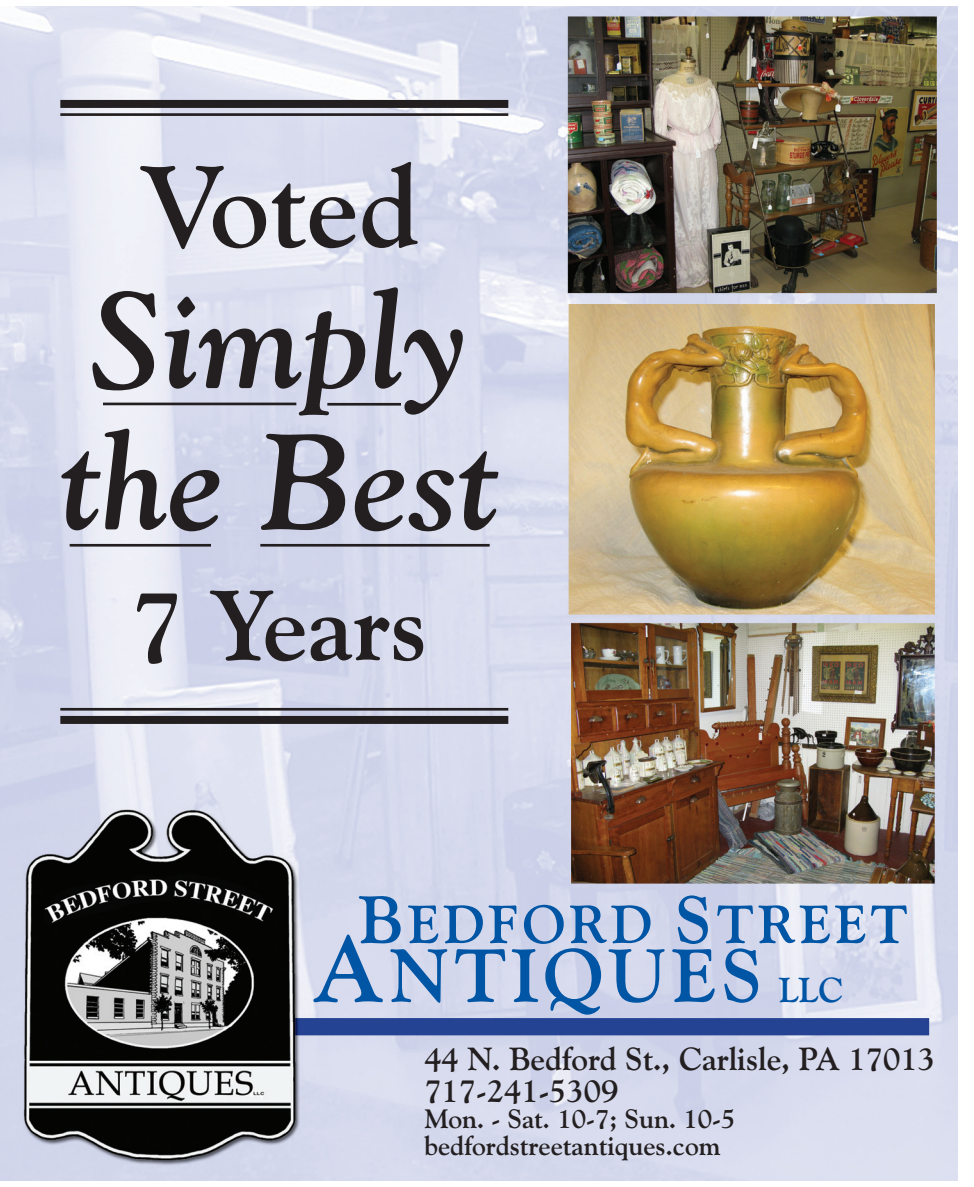
The Third Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Mr. James A. Dennis, who was convicted and sentenced to death in October of 1992 for the murder of Chedell Williams, a Philadelphia high school student. The court ruled that Dennis was denied a fair trial because the prosecution suppressed evidence of his innocence. In fact, Senior Justice Marjorie Rendell went so far as to say that the suppressed evidence "…effectively gutted the Commonwealth's case against Dennis."

"Once again, the courts have had to clean up the mess we have made for ourselves. This case confirms our worst fears - that innocent people may be sentenced to death and executed. Prosecutors deliberately hid several pieces of evidence that suggested all along that they knew someone else was guilty. The fact that it's taken 25 years to address this extreme prosecutorial misconduct is precisely why the death penalty doesn't work. This case should send a strong message that it is time for the death penalty to go.," said Kathleen Lucas, Executive Director of Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

A 2015 Pennsylvania public opinion poll showed that more than half of those questioned support a moratorium on executions. Senator Daylin Leach has re-introduced a bill that would end the use of the death penalty in the Commonwealth.

"If the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is going to take the irrevocable step of executing a human being, its capital sentencing system must be infallible. Pennsylvania's system is riddled with flaws, making it error prone, expensive, and anything but infallible.," said Governor Tom Wolf, announcing moratorium on executions in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania is one of the only states in the northeast that still retains capital punishment. Across the country, states have tried and failed to fix the inherent flaws in the system. We look forward to the day when our Commonwealth will join the rest of the civilized world and abandon the practice.



Safe Spaces, Trigger Warnings, Micro-aggressions

Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons
Harrisburg Area Community College

> Her mother…[said] that I had "raped" her daughter's mind...

The issue of trigger warnings flared up again this fall when the dean of students at the University of Chicago wrote a letter to incoming first-year students telling them there are no safe spaces at this university. John "Jay" Ellison said this was a matter of academic freedom. He said the university didn't support trigger warnings, it would not cancel invited speakers because their topic was controversial, and it did not condone the creation of intellectual safe spaces.

Ellison immediately received lots of criticism for his letter, much of it negative. Another letter signed by 150 Chicago professors said they disagreed with him. It was up to the profs, they said; some might use trigger warnings whereas others would not. (Originally used to alert readers to potential "triggering" events—such as sexual assault or PTSD—the term "trigger warning" has become more broadly defined to include professors telling students ahead of time about any potentially harmful or controversial subject matter in the text or during class discussion.)

The faculty letter said further that the classroom needs to be treated much the same as the rest of the campus. Issues of power and vulnerability don't stop at the classroom door, it said.

In a previous column I said that I don't support trigger warnings and used an incident in a class where one of my students objected to a class discussion on the rapper Eminem's explicit lyrics. Her mother wrote the college president, saying that I had "raped" her daughter's mind and wanted me removed from the classroom.

In that case academic freedom prevailed, as the rest of the students in the class had no problem with the discussion, and I had lots of support from colleagues, administrators and even board of trustees members.

Certainly campus safe spaces are important for marginalized people, whether they're students of color, immigrants or those on the LGBT spectrum. It's equally important to know there are safe zones in classrooms as well as in faculty and staff offices. Ideally the entire campus would be a safe zone, but we know that just isn't true.

Yet I continue to have problems with the concept of trigger warnings, at least in they way they are currently applied. We need to be sensitive to other people in general, and in the classroom professors need to recognize that many students are uncomfortable speaking out on hot-button topics, especially when the professor and other students seem to have no problem at all pontificating and dominating discussions.

At the outset, let me say that I am very aware of my white privilege as well as that of my being a straight, white, cisgender male who had the good fortune to be born in the United States of America. I also understand my power as a professor as well as an authority figure in other positions I hold. I need to use my authority and power wisely.

In my 20s and 30s I committed more than a few micro-aggressions without being aware of it. For those you who don't know what they are, micro-agressions are the ways in which majority people unintentionally cause pain or diminish minority people through comments like "But you don't act black!" (Or gay, or disabled, and so on.) Some people say that those who bear the brunt of micro-aggressions need to "get over it" or grow a tougher skin, but like death by a thousand cuts, micro-agressions accumulate.

I should have known better then, because as a teenager I had lived for two years in Kenya, where the colonialist mindset was pervasive among whites living there. I got a good education just listening to ignorant and hurtful comments directed at our black and brown brothers and sisters.

I didn't know any better when I made insensitive comments 40 years ago because I needed more education. More about what it's like to be a minority in white America, more education about "the other," more about my white privilege.

Today I still have a lot to learn, but I'm also acutely aware of the micro-aggressions many well meaning majority people make daily: Comments about other cultures, value systems, worldviews. And people on the LGBTQ spectrum are not immune. We've all heard someone from one place on the spectrum make insensitive comments about someone on another place.

I'm a strong supporter of academic freedom and free speech but I have always advocated their effective and appropriate use. Misuse of these important values is never effective and often causes a lot of pain.

Navy Names Ship After Rights Icon Harvey Milk

The U.S. Navy plans to name a ship after the LGBT rights icon and former Naval officer, Harvey Milk. According to a congressional notification signed by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, the Navy will name a planned Military Sealift Command fleet oiler USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO-206).

As reported by USNI News, "Milk came from a Navy family and commissioned in the service in 1951. He served has a diving officer in San Diego during the Korean War on the submarine rescue ship Kittiwake as a diving officer until 1955. Milk was honorably discharged from the service as a lieutenant junior grade. Following his service, Milk was elected to the San Francisco board of supervisors and was the first openly gay California politician to be elected to office. He was killed in office in 1978. When Milk was shot he was wearing his U.S. Navy Master Diver belt buckle.

Harvey Milk in dress Navy Blue uniform for his brother's wedding in 1954

Milk (far right) is campaigning with longshoremen in San Francisco during his 1976 race for the California State Assembly.

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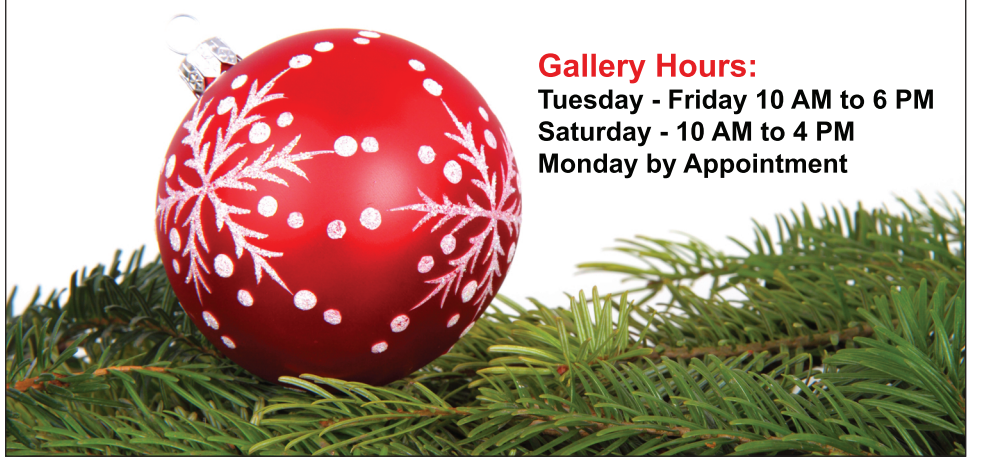

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Voting for President: QUICK FACTS

- **200 million** eligible voters in the 2012 presidential election
- **150 million** were registered to vote
- **87 million** actually voted
- **43.5%** of 200 million eligible voters cast a ballot

Come Back To Church
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Who Controls Your Happiness?

making sense of life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

How are you feeling about your future? Your answer may be greatly influenced by whether you are reading this article before or after the presidential election! As I write my column for this issue we are still several weeks away from that event. What will the future bring?

What the coming decades hold for us are partially tied to this country's selection of its new Commander in Chief. More important than that, however, is how we will choose to act or react to the possibilities for us in the next four years. We exist as victims if we live our lives in reactive mode, allowing events and circumstances outside our control to determine our mood, our attitude or our future.

It was Eleanor Roosevelt who admonished us that no one has the power to makes us feel inferior unless we give them that right. The active, empowered person reviews the situation and takes action to the best of her or his ability given the circumstances.

For some people in the U.S., particularly the LGBTQ communities, that could mean drastic change. Depending on the outcome of the Presidential Election, some might find Canada, Costa Rica, New Zealand or other countries to be safer for the near future. Those are certainly options, should one feel so inclined. However, would a new president be enough reason to make such a drastic change?

For a moment, step back from any political changes in government that will or have occurred, and think instead about your everyday life. What constitutes a "good" day from a "bad" day? It is good because you got your way, everyone agreed with you and all the lights were green? Does a bad day happen your plans imploded, someone challenged you or you hit every red light between Carlisle and Lebanon?

This is not about whether or not we have a positive attitude or are constantly "looking on the bright side" of life. It's about our priorities. Road rage is apparently on the uptick in recent years. Some driver cuts us off and we take it personally, not knowing that they are rushing to the hospital because their child was just admitted to surgery.

Even if something that dramatic isn't the case and the guy's just a total jerk, well, SO WHAT?!? Do we really want to give away our power to be happy to some inconsiderate, nincompoop who we'll probably never see again? The same is true for those of us who have been attacked – physically or emotionally. By staying in the trauma of a mugging, rape or passive-aggressive behavior and refusing to get help to move beyond the pain to the healing, we are victimizing ourselves all over again, while the perpetrator fails to receive any of our angst.

Would you be willing to stop and take at least three very deep breaths the next time you feel totally annoyed? I've been literally run over by another shopper in Giant, who then apologized most profusely. I might have liked to have let loose a slew of superlatives she'd not ever heard in public, but there's a standard response I prefer to use: "No worries, but thank you for saying so. I mean, compared to world peace, how important is this?"

This is not to minimize horrible situations in our lives or deride people for scars we all carry from the past. It is, however, a call-to-action for us to get our priorities straight (relatively speaking for some of us…ahem) with how happy we want to be. If we live our lives seeking to prove how victimized, sorrowful or inept we are (and people do … you know who they are!), then we need professional help. Life is too long to be lived in sadness, depression, anxiety and want, particularly when we believe that it's all because of forces outside ourselves we can't control.

Truthfully, there's a lot in our lives that is out of our control: the weather, my husband's smoking, people who don't R.S.V.P to a party and the woman with the Hummer who takes up three spaces at Wegmans. So will we choose to concentrate our focus on that over which we have no control?

Or, will we decide to take empowered action to live each day to the fullest, being responsible for our own happiness, success, prosperity and fulfillment. Either way the choice is ours. We have freedom of choice – but not of consequence – so choose wisely!

Terry is an author, speaker, licensed social worker and flight attendant. Read his weekly blog at Central Voice online or on his website at: blog.terrydrewkaranen.com. He is also the director of Spirit, Mind and Body Foundation (spiritmindbodyfoundation.org).

Providing Transgender Health Care Violates Religious Beliefs, Lawsuit Claims

By Zack Ford
LGBT Editor, ThinkProgress.org

Texas state officials have made no secret about their desire to discriminate against transgender people. A new lawsuit filed Tuesday makes clear that they now don't even want to provide transgender people health care.

Just a day after a federal court blocked the Department of Education from protecting transgender students from discrimination in schools thanks to a different lawsuit, Texas—joined by Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kentucky, and Kansas and represented by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty—filed a new complaint challenging regulations from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that prohibit discrimination against transgender people in health care. The rule ensures that trans people can access medically necessary treatment in procedures, have those procedures covered by insurance, and have their gender respected in medical facilities.

Texas wants to get rid of anything that protects trans people. This is Hobby Lobby 2.0. Strap in.

In addition to the five states, the plaintiffs include the Christian Medical & Dental Associations (CMDA)and Franciscan Alliance, a Catholic hospital system. According to the complaint, these organizations object to providing services (or even referrals) for transition-related care or providing insurance that covers such care because it violates their religious beliefs.

Essentially, this suit is akin to Hobby Lobby, except it objects to transgender care instead of birth control.

The complaint repeatedly refers to standards of care, and the need for states and physicians to be able to maintain "standards of care that rely upon the medical judgment of health professionals as to what is in the best interests of their patients." Requiring doctors to perform procedures that they do not believe are in the best interest of the patient would turn "the venerable medical oath to 'do no harm' on its head." Physicians should have the ability "to offer a contrary view" to HHS's conclusions that transition-related treatments are no longer "experimental." The plaintiffs in the suit believe that transition care is not only still experimental, but also "ethically questionable and potentially harmful."

Building standards of care around this belief, the complaint assures, does not compromise patients' respect:

Every person should be treated with dignity and respect, especially when in need of medical attention. The standard of care established in Texas, and around the country, enables patients to obtain quality healthcare as determined by medical professionals, and not those outside the doctor-patient relationship. The Regulation, however, usurps this standard of care. It discards independent medical judgment and a physician's duty to his or her patient's permanent well-being and replaces them with rigid commands.

Nowhere, however, does the suit acknowledge the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), which has maintained research-informed standards of care for transgender people for nearly 40 years. The WPATH standards, first proposed in 1979 and updated several times since, are based on "the best available science and expert professional consensus." They recommend affirming transgender people's identities and recognize that gender transition improves their well-being.

The plaintiffs in the suit make no secret of the fact that they reject this science in favor of their own religious beliefs. For example, the suit cites CMDA's "Transgender Identification Ethics Statement," which takes the literal opposite position of the WPATH standards, because validating transsexual "desires" is "contrary to a Christian worldview:

In contrast to the current culture, CMDA believes that finding one's identity within God's design will result in a more healthy and fulfilled life. CMDA believes, moreover, that social movements which contend that gender is decided by choice are mistaken in defining gender, not by nature, but according to desire. Authentic personal identity consists in social gender expression that is congruent with one's natural biological sex. CMDA recognizes that this traditional view has become counter-cultural; however, CMDA affirms that God's design transcends culture.

CMDA's statement also claims that affirming children's gender identity and allowing them to delay puberty has "lifelong physical, psychological, and social consequences," even though the available evidence says the exact opposite—that delaying puberty is safe and totally reversible.

Like CMDA, Franciscan similarly rejects the existence of transgender identities:

Franciscan holds religious beliefs that sexual identity is an objective fact rooted in nature as male or female persons. Like the Catholic Church it serves, Franciscan believes that a person's sex is ascertained biologically, and not by one's beliefs, desires, or feelings. Franciscan believes that part of the image of God is an organic part of every man and woman, and that women and men reflect God's image in unique, and uniquely dignified, ways. Franciscan does not believe that government has either the power or the authority to redefine sex.

The suit claims that even providing "psychiatric support" as part of a medical transition would violate its "best medical judgment and its religious beliefs." Even simply providing insurance coverage for such procedures would "constitute impermissible material cooperation with evil."

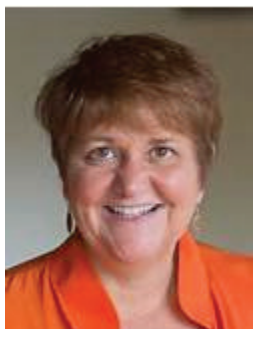
A Bishop In The Exam Room: When Faith Dictates Health Care Instead Of Science

By Erica Hellerstein and Josh Israelthinkprogress.org

Combined with a court decision last week that justified a funeral parlor firing a trans woman for religious reasons, this lawsuit sets a terrifying precedent for transgender people. If these cases reach the Supreme Court and it follows the same reasoning it used in Hobby Lobby—perhaps less likely without Justice Antonin Scalia, but still possible— it would create a society in which transgender people could legally be denied the necessary foundations of life simply because of their identities.

According to Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R), this is the thirteenth lawsuit he has been "forced to bring against the Obama Administration's continued threats on constitutional rights of Texans." Since President Obama took office in 2009, Texas has sued his administration at least 43 times.

United Methodists Elect First Openly Lesbian Bishop



The Western Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church (UMC) delegates elected Rev. Karen Oliveto, pastor of Glide Memorial UMC in San Francisco, CA into the office of Bishop. Rev. Oliveto will lead the church as the denomination's first openly gay bishop despite the ongoing policies forbidding ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals." On the heels of General Conference where the global denomination voted to defer the current anti-LGBTQ policies of the church to a special commission, electing Rev. Karen Oliveto is one of many actions United Methodists have taken to move the church forward despite the lack of policy change. Individuals, churches, and conferences are declaring and practicing non-conformity with the discriminatory aspects of church teaching, refusing to keep qualified LGBTQ candidates from becoming ministers and opening church doors to same-sex weddings.

Anti-LGBT Laws Coordinated at National Level

The Campaign for Accountability (CfA) released a report,Documenting Discrimination, uncovering how national right wing religious groups – working through smaller local groups – are spearheading the movement to legalize discrimination against LGBT individuals through Religious Freedom Restoration Act ("RFRA") legislation.

In the fall of 2015, CfA filed open record requests in Arizona, Texas, and Kentucky to identify the national groups behind state efforts to pass RFRAs.

In Arizona, CfA uncovered a close working relationship between state legislators, the Center for Arizona Policy, Alliance Defending Freedom, and the Family Research Council. Emails show that national groups helped write anti-LGBT bills and then testified in support of them.

One email chain reveals how the religious right groups directed the Arizona Legislature to pass a resolution honoring the Boy Scouts' "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy, which was nevertheless terminated six weeks after they passed the resolution.

In Texas, emails from a top staffer in the governor's office reveal how First Liberty, working hand-in-glove with a Texas group, Texas Values, was behind the state's RFRA bill.

In Kentucky, a national religious right group, Liberty Counsel, intervened on behalf of Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis to prevent any documents from the clerk's office from being released to CfA, drawing a rebuke from the state's attorney general.

PA Courts System Now Prohibit Discrimination

In an update initiated by the Pennsylvania Youth Congress, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has revised the Unified Judicial System's non-discrimination policy to include protections on the basis of gender identity and expression. This policy is now in effect at every court under the Supreme Court's jurisdiction, including the Superior, Commonwealth, Common Pleas, and Magisterial courts. The policy must be adhered to by court employees, as well as district attorneys and lawyers engaging in court-related matters.

In June 2016, Pennsylvania Youth Congress Executive Director Jason Landau Goodman approached Allegheny County Common Pleas Judge Christine Ward to propose this update. Judge Ward brought the proposed amendment to the Supreme Court which adopted the policy in in July 2016. A judicial system-wide memo was distributed in August to all Justices, Judges, Magisterial District Judges, and state-level judiciary employees announcing the new policy.

The amended non-discrimination policy is being hailed a seismic shift toward ensuring dignity and respect for transgender Pennsylvanians.

Actions that are now prohibited range from harassment by court employees toward transgender people, to prohibiting judges from discriminating against transgender people in open court. Additionally, court employees who are transgender are now explicitly protected against discrimination and harassment in their workplace. To address violations of the policy, members of the public and court employees may file a complaint which will be handled as are other cases of discrimination within the state judicial system.

Throughout the commonwealth, transgender people have shared how judges, court employees, prosecutors, and attorneys have been known to discriminate and demean them, both in personal interactions and in court proceedings. However, as the update reflects, the judiciary includes many judges who are supportive of fully respecting transgender people.

Landau Goodman praised the Commonwealth's highest court for their swift action. He said, "this is a significant moment in ensuring justice for all in our judicial system. Many transgender Pennsylvanians have too often had terrifying and traumatizing experiences in our judicial system. We are incredible proud of the Supreme Court's declaration that transgender people must be regarded with dignity." Further, he added that the policy "is instrumental in paving the way forward for openly transgender judges to serve across the commonwealth."

Ciora Thomas, founder of the transgender women of color support network Sisters United in Pittsburgh, reflected on the importance of this update. She said, "I am thrilled to know a safer and dignified future for trans people is becoming a reality. Now we can stand in front of any judge and be respected as women, men, and people, without being misgendered or incorrectly named. We now have the dignity we deserve as American citizens."

Several years ago, Ciora was before a local magistrate for a minor traffic citation, where she was relentlessly harassed by court employees and the judge. In open court, the judge only referred to her by her birth name and forced her to remove her hair. She complied in the dehumanizing process in order to avoid judicially-imposed consequences. She would now be able to file a complaint and see through a charge where the court employees and judge could be disciplined.

Deja Alvarez, the Director of the LGBTQ Home for Hope in Philadelphia, the first LGBTQ homeless shelter in Pennsylvania, said that the new policy "will help empower us to fight against any injustice and bias perpetrated against Trans* communities in the courts. This is a landmark moment in ending discrimination in a system that directly affects our ability to live, where our community is often unjustly put through the criminal justice system at alarmingly high rates."

The full policy can be found online at the Unified Judicial System's website, along with the complaint forms.

The Pennsylvania Youth Congress (PYC) advances freedom and justice for young LGBTQ Pennsylvanians through advocating for responsible public policy. As a youth-led organization, PYC represents citizens working toward safer schools and thriving communities across the commonwealth Info: payouthcongress.org

POLL: American majority oppose restrictive transgender laws

A new national survey from Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) finds that a majority of Americans oppose laws requiring transgender individuals to use bathrooms that correspond to their sex at birth rather than their gender identity.

LGBT Issues

As a federal judge in Texas blocks the Obama administration's guidelines on expanding bathroom use in public schools for transgender students, a major new PRRI survey released today finds that a majority (53 %) of Americans oppose laws that require transgender individuals to use bathrooms that correspond to their sex at birth rather than their current gender identity, compared to 35 % who favor such laws. Nearly two-thirds (64 %) of Democrats oppose laws that would require transgender individuals to use bathrooms that correspond to their assigned sex at birth, while Republicans are evenly divided: 44 % favor, 44 % oppose.

There are also striking partisan divides on perceptions of discrimination against minority groups. Approximately three-quarters of Democrats say there is a lot of discrimination against gay and lesbian people (75 %), transgender people (76 %), blacks (79 %), and immigrants (80 %). Notably, fewer than half of Republicans believe gay and lesbian people (42 %), transgender people (47 %), blacks (32 %), or immigrants (46 %) face significant discrimination.

The survey also finds opposition to same-sex marriage may be becoming a liability for political candidates, with 44 % of Americans saying they would not vote for a candidate who opposed same-sex marriage, including a majority (56 %) of Democrats but only 20 % of Republicans.

The 2016 Election

Looking at the election, the survey finds Republican candidate Donald Trump trailing Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton by 13 %age points among registered voters: 35 % vs. 48 %. However, both candidates are struggling to connect deeply with voters, with only 42 % of voters saying Clinton shares their values, and even fewer (31 %) saying the same of Trump.

The survey demonstrates that Trump's support has been strongest among white Protestant voters. However, the Republican nominee is struggling among white Catholics, a group that has favored Republican presidential candidates since 2000 and is critical in battleground states like Ohio and Pennsylvania. The survey report contains a full breakdown of the religious vote.

In addition to the issues covered here, the new PRRI survey examines attitudes on a number of other gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues and the 2016 presidential race, just 11 weeks ahead of the November election.

TransCentralPA Topics

By Joanne Carroll
president of TransCentralPA

"Tempus Fugit" – Time Flies, Let's Appeciate One Another

Tempus fugit is a Latin phrase, usually translated into English as "time flies". I cannot believe that another year is nearly complete, and as that thought comes to me, I am, and we are, forced to take stock of what do we have to show for it.

Whatever we have achieved, my only hope is that somehow we made a difference for someone in the larger LGBT community.

I am often asked by some as to why at my advancing age I am so involved in more than a handful of organizations and activities. My answer is standard, and some of you have heard this before, but for me it is all about "starfish". I accept that may be confusing to some, and others may have heard it before, but let me explain.

The story goes that an older man as he walked along the beach, observed a young boy throwing a starfish into the ocean. He asked the child, "Young man what on earth are you doing?" The child responded, "Sir, I am saving starfish!" The old man looked up and down the beach, saw that the beach was covered with starfish, and said, "Son, look at all these starfish, you will never save them all!" The boy replied, "Oh I know sir, but at least I saved this one!"

If in the course of this past year, if I have made life better for even on person within the LGBT community, then I have made a difference. I have to ask, what about you, have you made a difference in someone's life? I certainly hope you have! If you answered in the positive then in a few weeks, as we celebrate Thanksgiving, I will be thankful for your effort.

Speaking of Thanksgiving, although we have not yet achieved full fairness for all Pennsylvanians, we can give thanks for all of those among us that spoke to the politicians, wrote letters to the editor, signed petitions, stood out, or spoke at rallies supporting the Fairness Act. Their work was not in vain, each activity brings us just a little closer to full citizenship.

In addition, as I think about Thanksgiving it should remind us that we are coming up on a whole season of holiday parties and other get-togethers, for Hanukah, Kwanza, Christmas and of course New Year's Eve. There will be great food and of course, the obvious, "adult beverages" and because of the latter I ask you to do me a favor, be safe out there. We need all of us in the coming year to support one another.

In closing, I want to leave you with a challenge. You will likely spend time rushing around like a crazy person in your shopping excursions. Take a simpler approach, give a charitable gift on behalf of that special friend or relative. There are so many agencies that need our help; besides, who needs another tie or scarf, and how many gloves or mittens can we possibly need? There are food banks crying out for donated food to help the hungry. There are more needs in our communities than there are people to fulfil those needs. Save a starfish!

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanza, Happy Hanukah and more, then in 2017 join me as we try to get all the starfish off the beach.

Hugs n' love,

Joanne

Joanne Carroll is the current President of TransCentral PA.

US Juvenile & Criminal Justice Systems Endanger LGBTQ Youth

A comprehensive new report explores how the U.S. juvenile and criminal justice systems endanger the lives and life chances of young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ).

Among the report's most alarming findings is that the percentage of LGBT youth in juvenile detention is double that of LGBT youth in the general population; 20% of youth in juvenile justice facilities identify as LGBT or gender non-conforming compared to 7-9% of youth in general.

Unjust: How the Broken Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems Fail LGBTQ Youth is the product of a coalition of organizations working on issues including LGBT equality, homelessness prevention, education, criminal justice reform and more.

"This report confirms once and for all what many of us have known for some time: LGBTQ young people are grossly overrepresented in the juvenile justice system, and it's no coincidence. We live in a society where discrimination and stigma too often lead to criminalization and mistreatment at the hands of law enforcement," said Ineke Mushovic, Executive Director of the Movement Advancement Project (MAP).

The report also explores the widespread causes of the overrepresentation and documents the disparate—and often exceedingly harsh—treatment of LGBT youth by law enforcement, courts and detention facilities. The new report is a companion to a broader report released earlier this year, Unjust: How the Broken Criminal Justice System Fails LGBT People.

Why Overrepresented?

The Unjust report highlights several factors in the overrepresentation of LGBT young people in the juvenile justice system. They include:

· Pervasive anti-LGBT discrimination and stigma. LGBT youth are uniquely vulnerable to family rejection and mistreatment in child welfare and foster placements. More than half (56%) of lesbian and gay youth in New York City's child welfare system said they'd stayed on the streets because their foster care placement wasn't safe. These experiences dramatically increases the chances that LGBT youth will have interactions with law enforcement.

· Unsafe schools. LGBT students who are bullied and harassed in school often experience negative impacts including harsher school discipline, increased risk of substance abuse and mental health challenges, missed school and lower aspirations to attend college. Half (56%) of LGBT middle and high school students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and four in ten (39%) students felt unsafe because of their gender identity or expression. LGBT students, particularly students of color, also are among the groups of students who are more likely to be suspended, expelled or otherwise removed from school settings—often for relatively minor offenses—in scenarios that are now widely known as the "school-to-prison pipeline."

· Discriminatory enforcement of laws. Researchers find that LGBT young people are at increased risk for criminalization for sexual behavior in comparison to heterosexual youth, even when all other circumstances are the same (for example, a gay youth is more likely to be disciplined for public displays of affection than a heterosexual youth). Research finds that LGBT youth also pay a particularly high price for "quality of life" policing that includes crackdowns on minor crimes and "stop and frisk" policies. These interactions with law enforcement are frequently unsafe for LGBT youth; in New Orleans, 59% of transgender youth reported being asked for sexual favors by police.

"Existing policies often provide little promise of equal treatment under law for LGBTQ young people. Our research shows they are more likely to have negative and discriminatory interactions with teachers, foster parents, the child welfare system and even law enforcement officers," said Laura

E. Durso, Senior Director of the LGBT Research and Communications Project at the of the Center for American Progress (CAP), which coauthored the report. "As a result, LGBT young people are dramatically overrepresented in the criminal justice system. It is long past time we looked at the way the education, child welfare and law enforcement systems interact and continuously fail to provide safety and equality of opportunity these young people."

Discrimination & Abuse

The report also paints a comprehensive portrait of how LGBT youth are unfairly treated and abused once they enter the juvenile justice system. The following are among the problems it documents:

· Bias in pretrial release and court proceedings. LGBTQ young people face disadvantages in the arraignment process and are more likely to be placed in a facility to await trial, rather than being sent home. Forty percent of LGBTQ youth in California were held while awaiting adjudication for running away compared to just 13% of non-LGBTQ youth. They also report negative experiences in the court system; 44% of LGBTQ youth engaged in survival sex in New York City reported negative experiences with the court system.

· Mistreatment in juvenile justice facilities. Surveys show that LGBT youth are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault and abuse by staff and other youth in juvenile justice facilities. Aggravating the problem is the fact that transgender youth frequently are placed in facilities according to the sex on their birth certificate rather than the gender they live every day.

"LGBTQ young people are facing unacceptable levels of mistreatment, harassment and violence in the juvenile and criminal justice systems," said Shannon Wilber, Youth Project Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "Their experiences in these systems are a huge threat to their lives and life chances, and we are doing far too little to prepare them for a healthy and productive life after release."

The Unjust report includes numerous stories about people, organizations and juvenile justice institutions that are advancing positive changes to improve conditions and outcomes for LGBT youth. It also includes a series of recommendations for ensuring fairer treatment of LGBT young people in families, schools, communities and throughout the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Movement Advancement Project (MAP) is an independent think tank that provides rigorous research, insight, and analysis that help speed equality for LGBT people. MAP works collaboratively with LGBT organizations, advocates and funders, providing information, analysis and resources that help coordinate and strengthen efforts for maximum impact. MAP's policy research informs the public and policymakers about the legal and policy needs of LGBT people and their families.

Center for American Progress (CAP) is a think tank dedicated to improving the lives of Americans through ideas and action. CAP combines bold policy ideas with a modern communications platform to help shape the national debate. CAP is designed to provide long-term leadership and support to the progressive movement. CAP's policy experts cover a wide range of issue areas, and often work across disciplines to tackle complex, interrelated issues such as national security, energy, and climate change.

Bipartisan groups urge sentencing reform

More than a dozen Pennsylvania and national criminal justice and taxpayer advocates from across the ideological spectrum recently sent a letter to Pennsylvania's Justice Reinvestment Working Group urging the Working Group to study and address the issue of mandatory minimum sentencing laws as part of its current process.

Signers included the Commonwealth Foundation, Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration, American Conservative Union Foundation, and the Pennsylvania ACLU. The Working Group is comprised of 34 members from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and chaired by Josh Shapiro, chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

The letter reads, in part: In an effort to identify a potential cost driver at the front end of Pennsylvania's criminal justice system, we respectfully request that JRI Phase II include a comprehensive study of Pennsylvania's mandatory minimum laws before they were struck down, as well as the impact of how the elimination of mandatory minimums has impacted criminal justice outcomes. This study would include, at a minimum, the cost associated with mandatory minimums, their application (including any disparities in their application), and their impact on public safety. Additionally, we request that any recommendations from JRI to the legislature include whether to reestablish any of the mandatory minimums struck down last year by the Supreme Court.

Creepy-Scary Fiction

Halloween is over, but if you like creepy and scary in your fiction, try these anytime. Visit The Library online at dcls.org to put a title on hold, or visit any branch of The Library to browse for more good books, audiobooks, music, movies and video games. DVDs now rent for free and you can stream movies and TV with your library card. Click on 'hoopla' on our website to get started.

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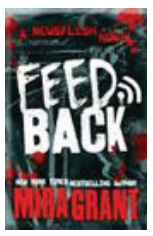
book reviews

By Deborah Battisti
Dauphin County Library System
www.dcls.org

My Sister Rosa *by Justine Larbalestier*
When his father's business takes the family to New York City, a seventeen-year-old Australian boy must balance his desire to protect his ten-year-old sister, a diagnosable psychopath, from the world with the desperate need to protect the world from her. A reviewer says, "Though narrated by an Australian white male, diversity abounds in the novel, effortlessly sharing the pages with the riveting plot as it builds to a frightening climax. This dark thriller is the 1956 film The Bad Seed meets 2016; readers will be simultaneously terrified when Rosa's present and afraid to let her out of their sight."



Feedback *by Mira Grant*
A U.S. presidential campaign set in a zombie-infested future bears an eerie resemblance to the way we live now. Aislinn "Ash" North and her housemates hope to hit the big time with their blogging skills when they apply to manage media for a Republican presidential candidate. Not surprisingly, "an Irish expatriate, a black man, a lesbian, and a techie who didn't want to be nailed down to a gender" prove to be a bad fit for the GOP, but the friends are shocked when the Democratic nominee, a woman in possession of a blue pantsuit, reaches out.

The Heavens Rise *by Christopher Rice*
Booklist says, "Creepy, chilling, and almost impossible to put down all describe the new novel by New York Times best-selling author Rice. In the swampy areas of New Orleans, Niquette Delongpre's family discovers an old well on their property, whose contents have dark supernatural properties. This is a horror novel, but in the telling of this page-turner, Rice also manages to deftly address issues of race and class in the Big Easy."

Bisexual Women Are at Higher Risk for Depression and Suicide

By Samantha Allen

LGBT rights may be moving forward, but bisexual acceptance is trailing far behind.

That's the harrowing message behind a new study from researchers at Drexel University, which found that young bisexual women score significantly higher on a survey measuring current suicidal thought than both straight women and lesbians.

The study, published in the Journal of Adolescent Health, analyzed responses from a survey distributed by primary care physicians to over 2,500 young people ages 14 to 24, dividing them by sexual orientation and measuring factors such as depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicidal ideation.

As lead author Annie Shearer, a research assistant in Drexel's College of Nursing and Health Professions, noted in a press release, lesbian respondents were "actually no more at risk" than straight women for depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and current levels of suicidality.

But while the social acceptance of gays and lesbians increases, bisexual people seem to be excluded from these gains. Bisexual women in Shearer's study reported significantly higher current suicide scores than any other orientation, lesbians included. Women who were unsure about their sexual orientation also reported more depression and anxiety than straight women.

In addition, Shearer's team examined mental health outcomes among young gay and bisexual men, finding that they scored significantly higher on depression and traumatic distress surveys than their straight peers, with bisexual men reporting particularly high lifetime suicide scores.

In contrast to the women, differences between gay and bisexual men's mental health were still present but not as stark, although it should be noted that men constituted a minority of the larger sample.

Her team's study points to several possible explanations for this disparity. Bisexual people, they note, face "unique stressors such as stereotypes that bisexuals are promiscuous or that bisexuality is 'just a phase.'" More troubling is the fact that bisexual people encounter these stubbornly persistent stereotypes both inside and outside of the broader LGBT community.

Not feeling at home in the LGBT community could be a major contributor to the mental health differences between bisexuals and other sexual minorities.

The cultural invisibility and erasure of bisexual people could also help explain the study's troubling results, Shearer told *The Daily Beast*. Despite outnumbering gay men and lesbians in the United States, bisexual people are drastically underrepresented on film and television. When bisexual characters do appear, they often perpetuate the harmful stereotypes that bi people are confused, deceitful, or universally promiscuous.

Bisexual people are also much less likely to be out of the closet than gay men or lesbians, as Pew research shows.

At present, some bisexual people even face discrimination in the doctor's office. In 2015, a study from an LGBT group in Scotland found that nearly half of bisexual respondents had experienced biphobic comments in a health care setting, leading some to hide their identities when they visit their physicians.

"Invisibility and a lack of community support may contribute to the higher incidence of mental health problems among bisexual persons," the Drexel researchers concluded.

Moving forward, Shearer hopes to see physicians treat young LGBT people with greater sensitivity and respect. Both her study and past research suggests that youth are forthcoming about their identity if doctors "simply ask."

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